China Today 2

Life at the Grassroots

CITY DWELLERS

LIFE ON THE COMMUNE

INSIDE A SHANGHAI FACTORY

OUT ON THE GRASSLAND

BEIJING REVIEW SPECIAL FEATURE SERIES

China's Administrative Division

Life at the Grassroots

First Printing, September 1981

Life at the Grassroots

CHINA TODAY (2)
"Beijing Review" Special Feature Series

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Published by BEIJING REVIEW
24 Baiwanzhuang Road
Beijing, China

Distributed by GUOJI SHUDIAN
(China Publications Centre)
P.O. Box 399, Beijing, China

Printed in the People's Republic of China

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A Word to Our Readers

Numbering 1,000 million, the Chinese people make up one of the most potent and yet unpublicized human factors in the world today. How does this one-quarter of mankind work, live and think? What are their concerns and aspirations, their sorrows and joys? This modest booklet is intended as a first step towards answering such questions.

Housewives, farmers, herdsmen, clerks, factory workers, cadres and technicians — these are the common folk of China about whom **Life at the Grassroots** is written. Told in their own words, their stories span a variety of backgrounds and generations, revealing the complexity of China's population. Details about daily lifestyles and routines, interspersed with reflections on the past and expectations for the future, give this work a multi-dimensional character at once personal and informative.

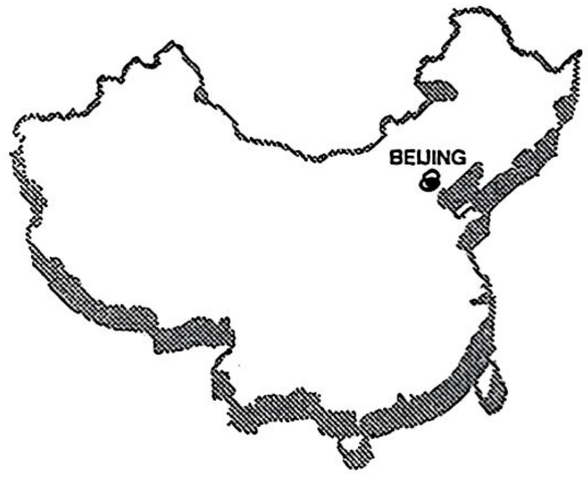
People are more easily understood when seen as part of their social environment. The lives of the individuals in this booklet are therefore presented in the context of the circumstances which influence them most, their homes and workplaces. How they are socially organized and what roles they play in these organizations are also shown. In the process, a great deal is said about the institutions themselves, making this additionally a study of basic so-

cial relations and the associations between individual and community in modern Chinese society.

Life at the Grassroots is admittedly only a glimpse into the kaleidoscopic world of New China. Compiled from four separately written special features published earlier in *Beijing Review*, the booklet has been limited by space and stylistic differences among the original reports. For all its shortcomings, it remains an accurate reflection of the tremendous changes that have taken and are still taking place in this vast and ancient land.

City Dwellers

Upwards of 130 million Chinese live in the cities and towns, of which the metropolises of Beijing, Shanghai and Tianjin are the largest. This investigative report on community life in a precinct of Beijing provides an insight into urban life in China through an examination of the interplay between individuals and their social organizations.



City Dwellers & the Neighbourhood Committee

SPRING time, 1981. The lights in many houses on Reed Bed Lane (Weikeng Hutong) went out one by one shortly after nine for several nights running. Their occupants were getting up earlier than usual on the following morning to plant flowers and shrubs to brighten their streets. The work was voluntary, one of the many activities organized by the local neighbourhood committee.

The urban neigbourhood committee is a self-governing popular organization whose members are elected directly by the local residents. It is entrusted with tasks which the local government cannot perform, but which nevertheless vitally affect residents' interests.

Beijing Municipality is divided into ten districts, including the city proper and some adjacent suburbs. Each district governs an average of three to five neighbourhood agencies, while a fairly big district may have as many as ten. There are altogether 85 such agencies in Beijing serving as arms of the district people's government.

The average neighbourhood agency, though not large, covers a precinct of more than 50,000 residents. Meeting the demands of so many people and relaying their opinions and requests to the district government concerned is no

easy job. The neigbourhood committee to a large extent makes this possible.

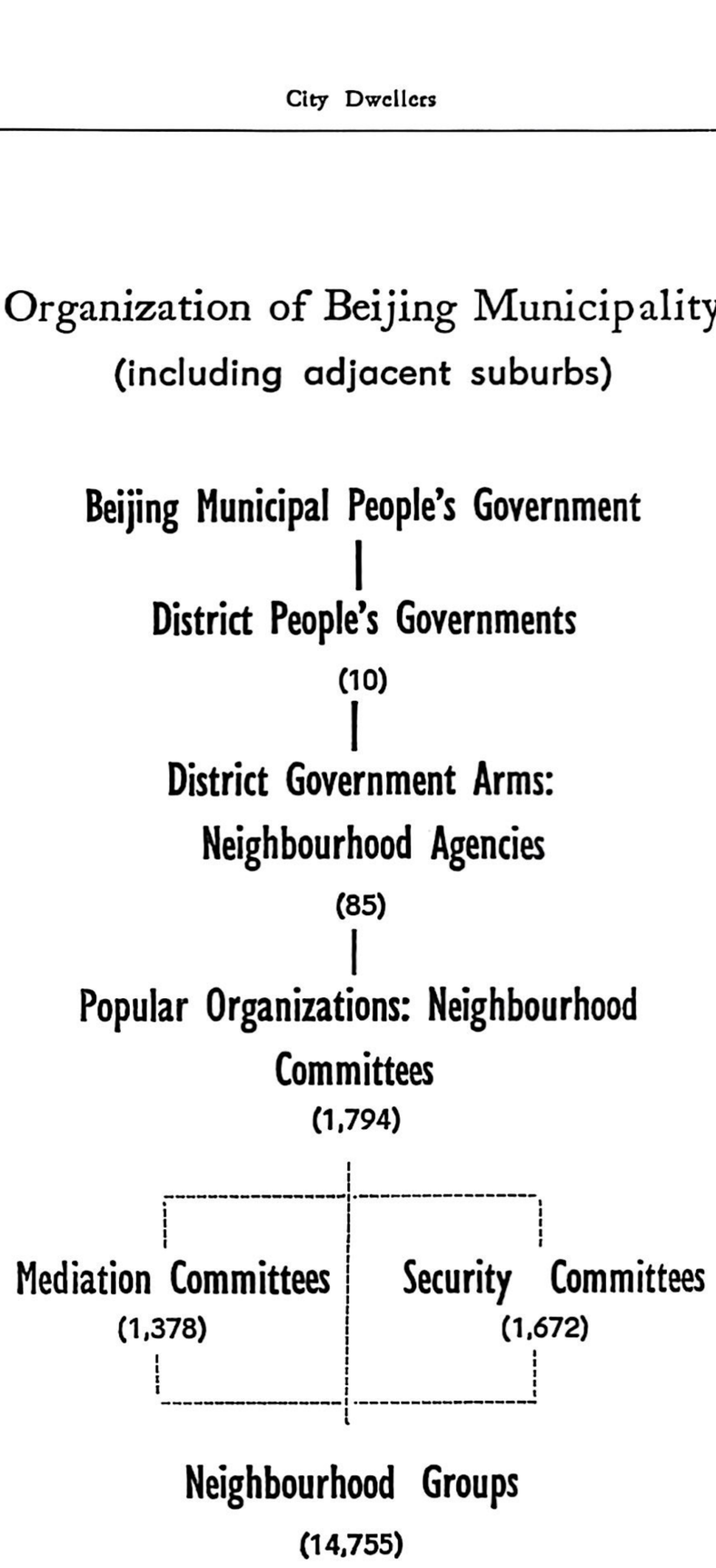
How the Neighbourhood Committee Functions

The neighbourhood committee is not part of the political power structure but functions under the leadership of the neighbourhood agency. Each committee takes care of three to seven hundred households and is composed of from 7 to 18 members, each of whom is elected by the neighbourhood group to which he or she belongs. The usual term of office is one year. Committee members choose among themselves a chairperson and assistants. All members volunteer their services to the neighbourhood without salary; however, in case of need, a reasonable government subsidy may be granted.

The functions of the neighbourhood committee are to establish and run public welfare projects of all kinds, relay local residents' opinions and demands to government agencies, help solve domestic problems, encourage residents to respond to government requests and abide by the law, take responsibility together with the residents themselves for security matters, and mediate between any residents who have differences.

Actually, neighbourhood committees handle a multitude of other problems as well. Over the past few years, for instance, they have been helping neighbourhood agencies find jobs for middle school graduates. They have also done organizational work among residents, aimed at

Organization of Beijing Municipality
(including adjacent suburbs)



improving public security, sanitation and outdoor beauty in the communities.

Each neighbourhood committee sponsors a health clinic which co-ordinates with a local district hospital in taking care of public health and epidemic-prevention. These health clinics are also equipped to give medical treatment to residents with minor illnesses. Family planning is now one of the health clinics' main priorities.

The neighbourhood committee thus acts as liaison between people and government organs. A resident may, for example, complain to his neighbourhood committee about noise or waste pollution by a nearby factory. The neighbourhood committee may then discuss the matter with the factory authorities, and if nothing is done, the neighbourhood agency or district government may intervene.

Security and Mediation Committees

These popular organizations come under the joint leadership of the neighbourhood committees and agencies, and function in co-operation with local public security organs and the people's courts.

The security committee helps maintain public security and order. Committee members are all local residents who know their neighbours fairly well — which persons in the community, for example, have committed crimes or disturbed the peace in other ways. Emphasis is placed on crime prevention through educating, organizing and encouraging the residents themselves to take adequate security measures; however, these committees have also

The *Hutongs* of Beijing

THE word *hutong*, which is what the small back streets or lanes of Beijing are called, is an unusual term used only in Beijing and a few northern cities. In fact it came originally from Mongolian roots. In the northern grasslands, communities tended to form around wells, so *hot*, or "well" in Mongolian, came also to mean a town, and a *hudu* or *hudun*, variants of it, a camp or village. Later applied to a small street, the sound gradually changed to *hutong*.

Small streets in Beijing began to be called *hutongs* after the Nuzhen people from the northeast, who founded the Jin Dynasty, captured the city in 1127 and made it their capital. The custom became more widespread when the city was the capital of the Yuan Dynasty (1271-1368) after the Mongol conquest.

Beijing's history is preserved in the names of its *hutongs*. Some retain the names of famous persons who once lived there, such as Wu Liang Daren for His Excellency Wu Liang. Others are named for well-known craftsmen or shops, such as Doufu Chen Hutong for a beancurd seller named Chen. There are also lanes with names like Jinyu (Goldfish) and Shoupa (Handkerchief).

Generally speaking, when one of the winding *hutongs* makes a major turn, it takes on a new name. There are some 6,000 *hutongs* in Beijing. In the wider ones two buses can pass. The narrowest spot is the southern end of Gaoxiao Hutong, through which only one person can walk at a time. The longest, Rongxian (Embroidery Floss) Hutong, is two kilometres, the shortest, Yichi Dajie (One-Foot Street), only twenty metres.

assisted residents in recovering stolen property, and have successfully helped some juvenile delinquents to change their ways. In addition, as the nation's legal system has been instituted on a sounder basis over the past few years, security committees have played an important role in explaining the newly enacted laws to the populace so that everyone knows their content.

The mediation committee helps iron out differences among local residents which in many cases have arisen simply because of overcrowded living conditions. There are also occasions of sons and daughters refusing to look after their aged parents, of husbands mistreating wives and of quarrels between husband and wife. The mediation committees handle such cases according to government policy so that the parties involved do not have to go to court. In 1980 alone, these committees mediated in 521,318 cases of civil dispute in Beijing, more than five times the number of civil cases handled that year by the capital's district people's courts.

The people who work in these popular organizations are highly respected in their communities for always being ready to help. Well acquainted with their neighbourhood situation, they are often able to solve problems in a more practical and suitable way than outside government organs. They are liked and trusted and so can act as competent assistants to the people's government, helping to improve local community life and cementing ties between the government and the people.

These organizations were weakened during the turmoil of the "cultural revolution," while some even fell into the hands of ultra-Leftists. An urgent task today is therefore to restructure and underpin these grassroots popular organizations. Early in 1980 the National People's Congress Standing Committee once again publicized the regulations governing urban neighbourhood agencies

and committees that were first promulgated in 1954, reaffirming the validity and importance of these regulations. Since then, the Beijing Municipality and district governments have sent trained personnel into many of these organizations to help them in their work.

Reed Bed Lane Neighbourhood Committee

The Neighbourhood Committee of Reed Bed Lane takes care of 2,100 residents living in 620 households. Ten neighbourhood groups comprise the committee.

Public Welfare Is Their Concern

Committee chairperson Guan Shumin is 71 now. Her 30 years of work in the neighbourhood have made her well-acquainted with almost all of the families there. Though she no longer does all the footwork she once did, she goes to the committee office every day to receive residents and handle committee business.

The office is just one simply furnished room, but it is tidy and well lighted. It has bookshelves with a variety of publications for teenagers, as well as a 14-inch black-and-white TV set for community residents who do not have one of their own. They pay two cents to watch an evening's programme, which helps defray electricity expenses. The committee's monthly operation allowance from the district goverment is very small, so it has to count every penny.

Meng Suyi, who heads the security committee, is another old-timer in neighbourhood work. She used to chair the mediation committee and left with an excellent record. She also served as an assessor in the People's Court of Xicheng District. At 55 she is an energetic woman always eager to help others. Her husband is an invalid, but with two grown children, Meng Suyi is able to take care of him and work in the neighbourhood as well. The other three assistant heads of the neighbourhood committee are all middle-aged women who like their work of serving the community.

"Sometimes," said Meng, who is also a vice-chairperson of the committee, "it's hard to say what has kept us busy all day. There are so many different kinds of things to do. A few days ago we had to notify each household about killing mosquitoes that night; in a few days we'll issue rat poison to our residents and tell them how to get rid of rats with it. The new school term has started, and our committee will send letters to the schools requesting tuition exemption for some financially worse-off families. And now with the weather getting cold, it's our duty to visit homes to see if stoves and flues are properly installed to avoid carbon monoxide poisoning. Then there are the arrangements to be made for pre-school-age children to receive their preventive inoculations against polio.... Of course, all these things are not done by just a few of us. We get help from the neighbourhood groups, who also serve the community without pay."

Old-Time Slum

Reed Bed, or Weikeng, got its name from the reed swamp it was built on in the days before liberation. At that time it was a slum area and had only one well for

the more than 200 households living there. People had to line up sometimes until midnight for water.

After liberation the old and dilapidated houses — built in quadrangles with courtyards in the centre, the typical style of old Beijing — were repaired or renovated to make them fit for human habitation. Urban Beijing before liberation had 15 million square metres of housing space; it has more than 40 million now, mostly apartment buildings equipped with flush toilets. About one-quarter of the 1.2 million families in the capital are still living in one-storey courtyard-style dwellings.

Here, each courtyard houses three or four families, who share a water faucet outside their door. Most of these households still use coal stoves for cooking and heating, though overall about 60 per cent of the households in Beijing now use piped or bottled natural gas for cooking. Neither housing nor the general living standard in Reed Bed Lane is as good as in most residential areas in Beijing. Compared with past generations, however, people today are quite well-off, due mainly to the fact that practically all working-aged residents, including former housewives, are employed and have a regular income that covers their basic needs. And in the past few years, as more people have been paid according to their individual effort, the people here have higher incomes and are eating and dressing better than ever before.

The big problem now is finding employment for the young people. The economic stagnation of the "cultural revolution" and rapid population growth have brought this problem to the fore, and it is only recently being tackled. In January 1980, Beijing had 220,000 young people looking for jobs; by the end of the year, 165,000 had found them. In the last few years Reed Bed Lane has had around 200 jobless young people; half of these are now fully employed, while 54 have become temporary workers. A

few are preparing for college entrance examinations and not seeking jobs, while still fewer are physically unemployable. Meanwhile, jobs are being sought for the rest.

Another urgent problem demanding attention is the quality of housing. The neighbourhood committee organizes community members to try to improve things for themselves. Sanitary conditions are closely watched to prevent gastro-intestinal diseases. And for three consecutive years there has been no fire, theft, vandalism, or carbon monoxide poisoning in the community. Largely because of the efforts of its neighbourhood committee, Reed Bed Lane has thus been cited by the municipality as a "safe neighbourhood."

Profiles

Working Mother of Six

Yao Yubao, 52, cooks at a nearby middle school canteen. Her husband is a warehouse janitor, and a grown daughter and son still live at home with the couple. Yao Yubao earns 48 yuan a month (the monthly average for China's workers and staff members in 1980 was 67 yuan).

Asked how she fared, she said all right, adding that her only big problem had been solved with the help of the neighbourhood committte. "You see," she explained, "people used to want to have a lot children to take care of them in their old age. For a long time, the government did not encourage family planning. Well, I have six children and did not have time to look after them properly when they were young. Our third boy fell in with a petty thief and sold a stolen overcoat for that fellow. He was arrested and sent to a reform school. He ran away several times, which prolonged his stay there.

"He was finally re-educated and released, but neither he nor the rest of us were happy because no one would give a job to a reform school graduate."

"For years," Yao Yubao continued, "my husband blamed me for failing to bring the boy up right. He would come home from work and sit alone drinking. He became so sullen that I found it impossible to stay at home with him and used to spend a lot of time at neighbours' homes."

The neighbourhood committee learnt of the problem and began enquiring at places with job vacancies. They reminded the authorities of the government policy to help reformed young people and give them a chance to work and take their place in society. Finally a building company took the Yao boy on.

"Life is more pleasant now that my husband no longer quarrels with me. Our other children all wrote to the neighbourhood committee thanking them. I can work better too. The school where I cook recognized my service last summer by giving me a free vacation at the seaside resort of Beidaihe."

Wage and State Subsidies

THE standard of living of the Chinese city dwellers is not as low as the 70 minus yuan average monthly wage would imply because the state subsidizes virtually all necessities, of which food, rent, education, public health, utilities and culture head the list.

For example, a kilogramme of flour and edible oil cost the state 0.492 yuan and 2.92 yuan respectively. The retail prices are 0.37 yuan and 1.70 yuan. Differences in cost and retail prices also exist in non-staple food items like fish, meat and eggs.

Subsidies in this respect totalled more than 400 million yuan in 1980, or 78 yuan for each of Beijing's five million urban dwellers.

Rent subsidies should also be taken into consideration. In many countries, rent is a major expense, taking up one-third or one-half of people's income. In socialist China, it is only one-thirtieth to one-twentieth of their income.

Most urban housing is built by the city authorities

or by enterprises. Since rent is low, it does not defray maintenance and management costs, for which the state pays for Beijing's residents annual subsidies of 30 million yuan. Depreciation fees of houses and interest on investments for house-building are all borne by the state.

Based on the average amount of living space, every Beijing resident would have to pay 68 yuan for rent. In fact, he only pays seven yuan.

Every year, the state spends 500 million yuan on culture and education, or 96 yuan per capita. Tuition fee for primary and secondary schooling amounts to only a few yuan while university education is completely free. University students who are hard up receive state allowances.

All workers have free medical care while their family members pay only half of the medical bill and the factories pay the other half. State subsidies for public health in Beijing average 61 yuan per capita.

Urban utilities, including municipal roads, gas, water, electricity, communications, transportation, public parks and environmental protection are all subsidized by the state, averaging an annual 350 million yuan, or 69 yuan per capita.

In all, annual subsidies have reached 400 yuan per capita in Beijing.

Housewife Turned Factory Worker

One of Yao Yubao's neighbours is 46-year-old Li Fengying, a former housewife who took a job in a glove factory when her two children were old enough to take care of themselves. She started out at a salary of 35 yuan a month, but as the factory has prospered and she has worked hard, she is now receiving a bonus which brings her monthly income up to 70 yuan. Her husband, a construction worker with 20 years of experience, earns over 100 yuan a month. Both husband and wife have a middle school education and their life is fairly good.

Li Fengying said: "I go to work by bus in the morning and have lunch at the factory. My husband does the same. Back home in the evening, we share the housework, such as washing and cooking. Both of us are busy all day long."

This family, with one son still in middle school and living at home, has two simply furnished rooms. The house appears neat and comfortable, while outside grow some flowers and luffa gourds. Their elder son is a pharmacology student at the Army Medical School in Shanghai and is getting good marks. His mother said: "Our younger son is also doing well in school and his class teacher says he has good prospects for entering college after graduation. But at this point he wants to work in a quick lunch restaurant."

Meng Suyi observed that people here often have attitudes quite different from those found in residential quarters where intellectuals and cadres live; in her neighbourhood, people are not all that interested in going to college but want jobs after middle school. Young people here have even sought sanitation jobs, traditionally considered menial, because the pay is good and many fringe benefits are offered. Moreover, sanitation work is now regarded as no less decent than any other. Still, the Lis' neighbours think they should be proud to have a son in medical school.

Middle-Ranking Army Officer

In another compound lives 53-year-old Liu Hanbang with his wife and daughter. Two sons are working in other cities. Liu is a regimental deputy political commissar. Their three-room house looks quite spacious.

In front is a small yard about eight square metres in size. On summer evenings the family eats outside under the tree, and often enjoys watermelon cooled in a bucket of Beijing's icy tap water. Most Beijing residents do not have refrigerators.

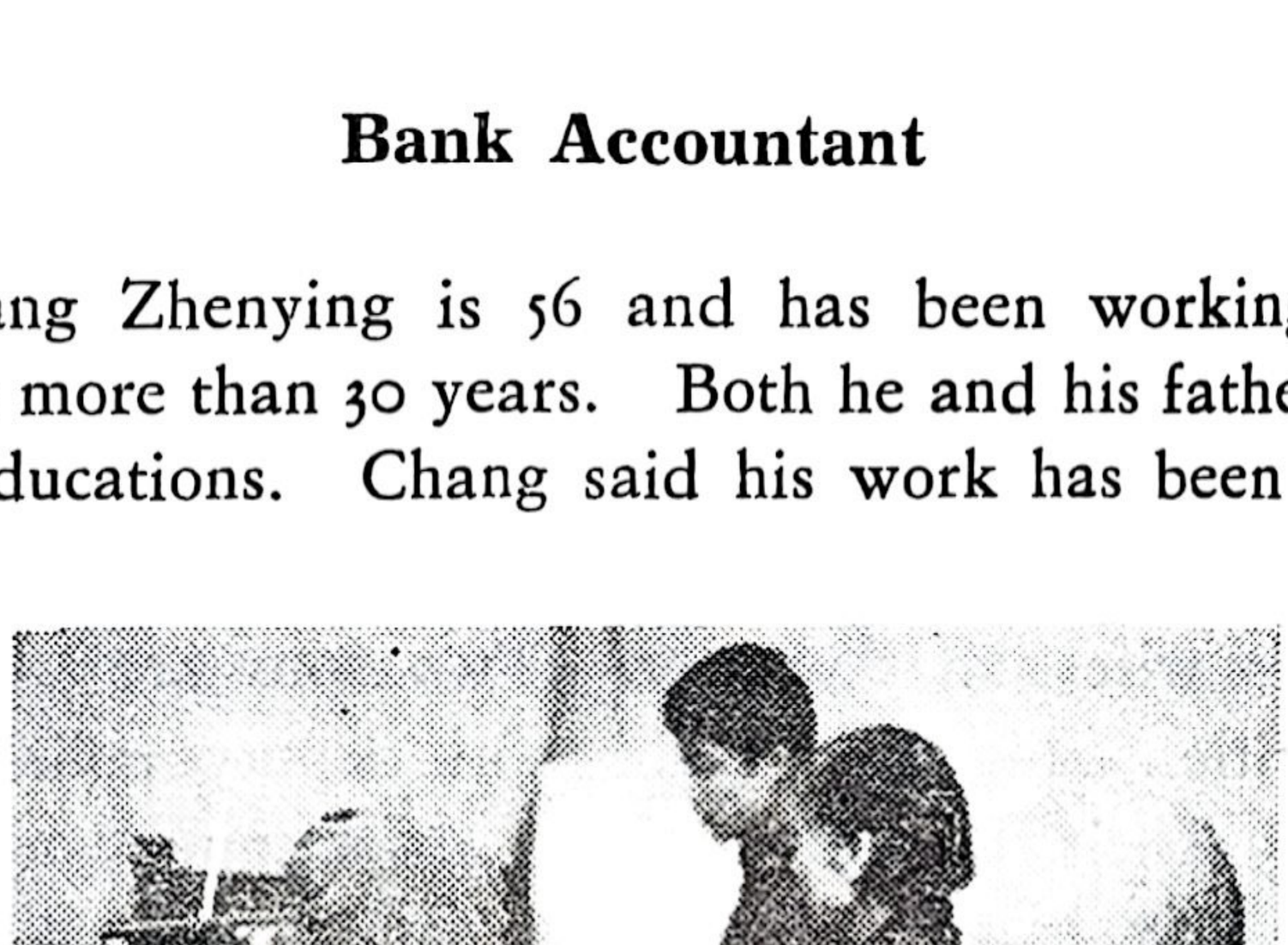
Several years ago Liu's unit offered him a fine flat in an apartment building for its officers. Not wanting his children to grow up spoiled by his military rank, however, Liu chose to remain in this simpler courtyard home. At present, convalescent Liu takes an active part in the meetings of the local residents and knows about their difficulties and problems. "As a member of the armed forces serving the public, I feel I should always stay close to the people," he said.

Liu's wife practises traditional Chinese medicine. She enjoys her work so much that in the evenings she often re-examines the prescriptions made for her patients, comparing them with prescriptions written by more experienced doctors of Chinese medicine.

Their daughter is working now and likes to follow the new fashions like most young city women. Her parents feel it's all right to keep up with the styles, but not to overdo things.

Bank Accountant

Chang Zhenying is 56 and has been working in a bank for more than 30 years. Both he and his father have higher educations. Chang said his work has been busier



in the last few years; since the interest rate on bank deposits was raised in 1979 and two new wage increases have gone into effect nationwide, more people are putting money in the bank.

Chang Zhenying is a soccer and movie fan and watches both on the family's television set. His wife is a factory worker but still does a lot of housework when she comes home.

With Chang live his octogenarian father, mother-in-law, two sons from his first marriage and two more sons

from his present marriage. All eight people are squeezed into three rooms. "It is a good thing all the children are boys," quipped Chang. "If we had any girls, I don't know how we'd manage."

The family once had six rooms, but during the "cultural revolution" they were forced to hand over three of them to other families; such discrimination against intellectuals was not at all uncommon in those years. Due to the housing shortage in Beijing, this injustice has not been rectified. Still, the family of three generations gets along quite well.

"In the evenings we read the newspapers and debate current issues. Sometimes our ideas differ, but all three generations appreciate most of the recent political and economic reforms introduced by the government," said Chang.

All four boys grew up in the confusion of the "cultural revolution" and consider themselves its victims because they missed getting a good education. Three have become workers, while the family hopes the youngest will pass the college entrance examination in 1981.

Two Old Folks

Lone Widow.

Fang Shuping is 66 now and has no children. Her late husband was a vegetable vendor. The neighbourhood committee urged her to enter a home for the aged but, not wanting to leave her home and friends, she refused. As she has little means of support, the committee reported her situation to the Bureau of Civil Affairs, which now provides her with a monthly living allowance.

Sold as a child bride at the age of five, Fang Shuping

leads a comfortable, secure life today, eats well and cherishes her old double bed. Her neighbours all help her in her daily life and see that she has everything she needs.

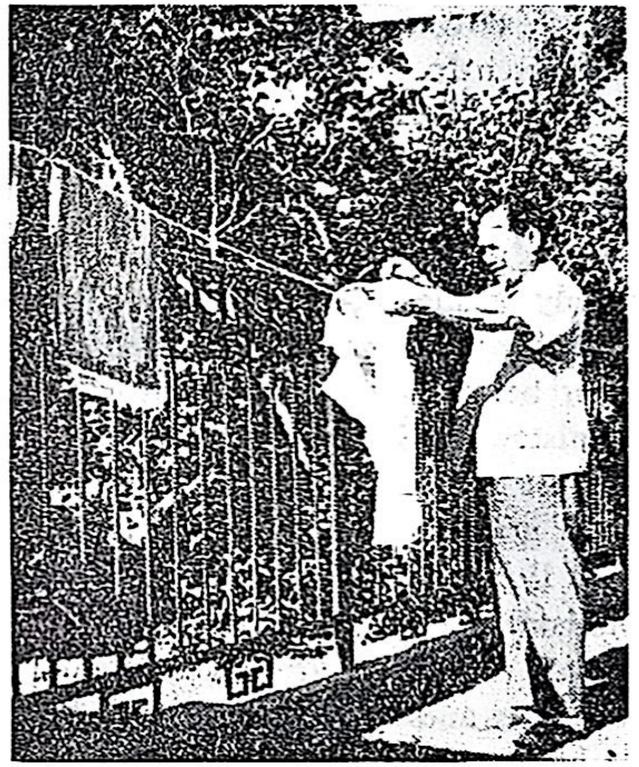
Retired Worker.

Seventy-two-year-old Zhang Ziyuan, a retired carpenter, was left alone in 1979 when his wife died. A step-daughter who works in a commune on the city's outskirts visits him often, helps him with his chores and gives him plenty of loving care. Though she is not his own daughter, she follows the Chinese tradition of looking after the aged. In fact this is prescribed by law in China.

Zhang's retirement pension amounts to 44 yuan a month, quite adequate to support him. And people are always willing to help. Recently when workers at his factory learnt that he had been slightly paralysed in a fall, they made him an easy chair. On holidays they often visit him with a basket of fruit. Occasionally he

cooks a meal for himself, though he usually eats at the neighbourhood canteen where the food is well cooked and reasonably priced.

Ranking Official



North of Reed Bed Lane are two apartment buildings which also fall within the jurisdiction of the Reed Bed Lane Neighbourhood Committee. Vice-Minister of Public Health Guo Ziheng lives in one of the flats, where living conditions are much better than in the older courtyards. Each apartment is equipped with central heating, a gas stove and flush toilet, though they are far from luxurious.

The vice-minister, 57, and his family of four have a three-room flat. One is used as a study and living room. The daughter, who works at the airport, comes home only on weekends, while an unmarried son in college lives with the family.

An orthopaedist by profession, Guo Ziheng graduated from the Chinese Medical University in 1947. He later went to the Soviet Union for four years of further study

at the Leningrad Medical Institute's department of orthopaedics.

In 1961 he became vice-director of the Jishuitan Hospital in Beijing and secretary of the Party committee there. He was transferred to his present post in 1978. Still he remains in the same flat and goes to work by bicycle.

Guo Ziheng gets up every day at six to jog and do other exercises, with a transistor radio in his pocket so he can listen to the news and English lessons. On Sundays, he often shops at the local market and then comes home to cook the family meal himself. Though he has the means, he does not plan to buy a washing machine. "Laundry is no big problem for us. Everyone in our family washes his own clothes," he said.

A recent change in Guo's life was giving up cigarettes after being a chain smoker for more than 30 years. The Ministry of Public Health has issued health warnings against smoking, and as a leader, Guo thinks he should set a good example.

But the change in his daily work since becoming vice-minister is greater than that in his lifestyle. He said it was difficult getting accustomed to attending so many meetings and reading volumes of official documents. Some of his evenings are also taken up with activities involving foreign visitors. He does arrange to spend time with his family on Sundays, however, seeing to it that he always gets in an hour of badminton with his daughter.

— by Luo Fu

Life on the Farm

Situated on the East China plain, Qianzhou People's Commune is one of 54,000 such social units which constitute the basic administrative structure of rural China. They are significant in many ways, not the least of which is the fact that four-fifths of China's population — 800 million peasants in all — live there.

Life on the Farm: Qianzhou People's Commune

ABOUT 30 minutes by car northwest of Wuxi city lies Qianzhou Commune. In the town where the commune's administrative organs and major public utilities are located, there is a T-shaped main street flanked by a post office, bank, department store, grocery, bookshop, hotel, public bathhouse and various other small stores. Just off this street is a courtyard with an array of flowers and the two small buildings where the commune Party and management committee offices are located.

Government Organization

The Party committee and management committee are the nucleus of this 36,000-member commune. The former, consisting of 14 people elected by the commune's 849 Party members, is responsible for discussing and deciding major commune issues concerning agriculture, industry, culture, education, health and the militia. The management committee, which also functions as the local government authority, is responsible for putting these decisions into prac-

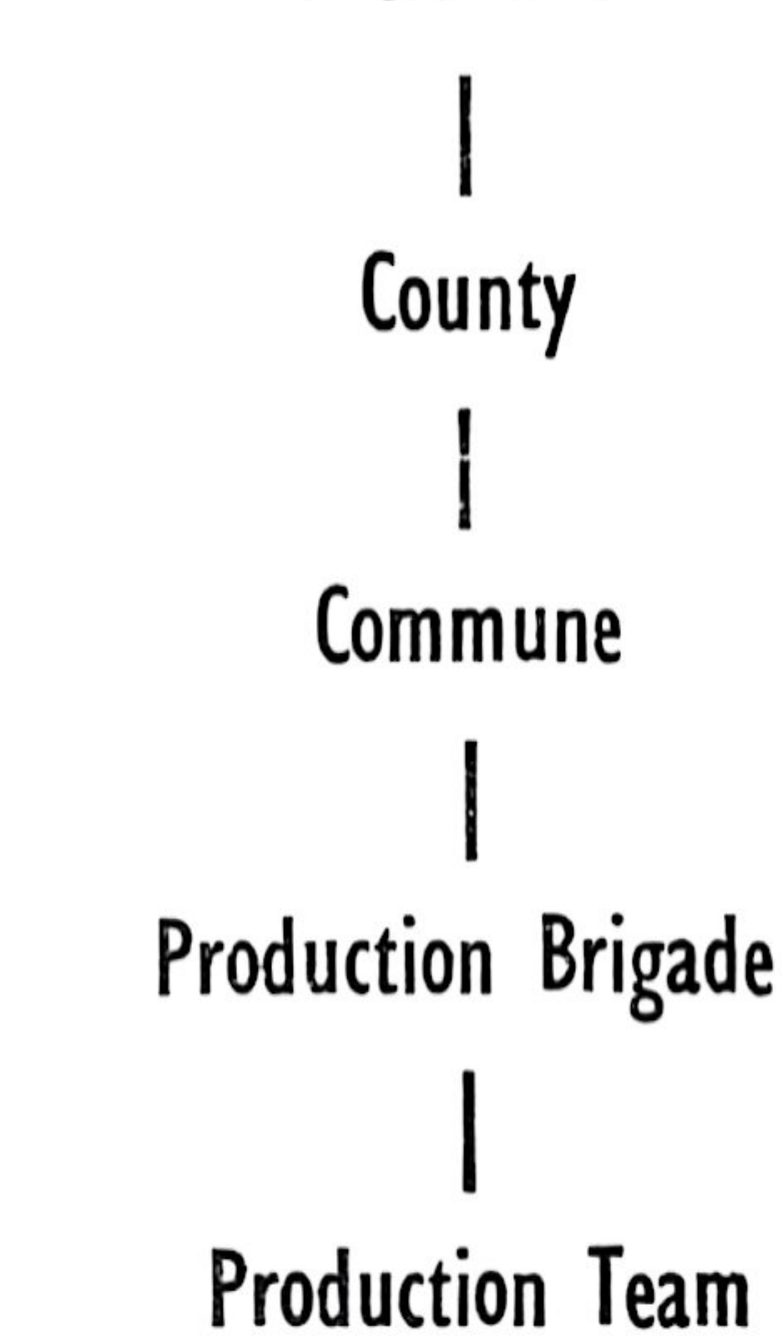
tice. In the past, these managers were chosen by the commune people's congress, which in turn was elected directly by the commune members; this system was disrupted during the "cultural revolution," however, and a democratic election of a new management committee has not yet been held.

The commune covers an area of 35 square kilometres (8,650 acres) and is organized into 21 production brigades according to the location of the original villages and the lay of the land. The production brigades are further divided into 278 production teams which function as the "basic accounting units" in this three-tiered management system. Responsible for its own gains and losses, each production team consists of 20 to 30 peasant families and directly organizes agricultural and sideline production, decides on the distribution of income and handles matters of daily life for the commune members. However, when production plans and construction programmes for the commune and brigades are drawn up, the production teams must subordinate themselves to the overall interests of the larger units and accept their leadership. As the production team is a small-scale organization, it is generally unable to run industry, so factories are managed by the production brigades or the commune.

Changes

Qianzhou Commune, situated on the low-lying east China plain, often suffered from flooding and waterlogging in the past. According to *Records on the Transformation of the Lake*, an old local history book preserved by the commune: "In the low-lying areas, water swells a foot when there is an inch of rainfall. A long rainy

Administrative Division in Rural China



spell causes a flood which does not subside for six months. . . . In nine years out of ten there is famine."

After liberation, Qianzhou, like other rural areas in China, went through land reform, the co-operative transformation of agriculture and the establishing of a people's commune. It gradually embarked on the socialist road through this process, a road which has freed its members from class exploitation and oppression and which is leading to common prosperity.

Though this road has not been easy, it has brought vital changes to Qianzhou. A significant development in the regional economy has been effected by dramatically

altering production in two ways: the monoculture economy of rice production has been diversified and water conservancy projects have been built, bringing an end to the devastating floods of the past. As Qianzhou's population has always been relatively large in relation to the amount of land it covers, the commune has used its surplus agricultural labour force and local resources to develop sericulture, raise pigs and fish, and run small-scale industry. Such enterprises have brought in an annual accumulation of construction funds, enabling the commune to buy 720 agricultural machines and thereby mechanize 60 per cent of its farm work as of 1980. Water conservancy projects were expanded most remarkably between 1970 and 1978. The commune members built a 19-kilometre dyke across the low-lying land, dug numerous underground and surface drainage canals and set up 124 irrigation pumping stations during this period.

Local Industry

Qianzhou Commune has prospered greatly from its industries and sideline enterprises. Its success has also won nationwide recognition; it was commended at a meeting of the country's advanced units and model wofkers in Beijing in January 1980.

There are now some 80 commune- and brigade-run factories in Qianzhou, including farm machinery plants, a shipyard (the rivers here flow into the Grand Canal and Taihu Lake), brick and tile kilns, cement factories, grain and fodder processing workshops, printing and dyeing equipment plants providing fittings for larger factories, and an electric pulley plant. Its embroidery mill and goathair brush factory feed into the export market. Together these plants produce over 500 varieties of products, many of which enjoy a high reputation for quality and account for profits of several million yuan annually. As a result of its local industrial efforts, the commune has an accumulation fund of 10 million yuan, while its members' average income in 1980 (see chart above) was nearly 3 times that of 1970.

1980 Development of the Commune's Production And Improvement of Its Members' Livelihood

Year	*Grain (per-mu output)*	*Total agricultural output value*	*Total output value of sideline occupations*	*Total industrial output value*	*Per-capita income from the collective*
	kg.	yuan	yuan	yuan	yuan
1952	145	1,805,000	356,000		
1957	155	2,180,000	430,000		42
1970	450	3,760,000	925,000	1,530,000	75
1979	835	5,500,000	5,450,000	36,000,000	165
1980	683	4,470,000	6,280,000	74,480,000	216*

* Living costs in the countryside are lower than in the cities. Peasants have their own houses and wells, so they need not pay rent and water. Their expenditures on electricity and transport are low. Most of their cash incomes are reserved for building houses.

Commune Party Committee Secretary

Qin Jiahong, head of the Party committee here, is a solidly built, vigorous, middle-aged man of medium height. He is up early every morning for his daily inspection tour of nearby farmland, returning to the commune-office canteen for breakfast at around seven o'clock. Before starting work at eight, he always waters the flowers in the courtyard outside his office.

Responsible members of a commune undoubtedly have a lot of work to do, co-ordinating economic as well as administrative affairs. How do they manage? "We concentrate on matters of central importance and see that Party and government principles and policies are carried out," Qin Jiahong said. "To do this well, we must constantly investigate local conditions and solicit people's opinions. We have to deal with a whole range of matters from industrial and agricultural production to commune members' problems in everyday life."

Asked how he goes about his day-to-day work, Qin replied: "Take the day before yesterday, for example. I made an early morning inspection tour of one of our production brigades, then visited a newly mechanized sericulture yard in another nearby commune. In the afternoon I chaired a meeting of team leaders at a production brigade in the east, during which experiences in wheat-growing were exchanged. I spoke of past agricultural production tasks and presented a plan for the next development stage. That evening I called a regular Party committee meeting, then read the papers until nine o'clock, when I listened to

the Japanese language lesson on the radio. Then I called it a day."

Qin Jiahong and his family have a two-room house in nearby Wuxi. His wife is an accountant in a county chemical and building materials company. They have a daughter, who became a factory technician after graduating from the university, and a son working as a radio repairman.

This Party secretary started off as an apprentice in a Shanghai store selling cotton piece-goods at the age of 12. Now a cadre earning 90 yuan a month, he has retained a down-to-earth style of work to this day. He does not go home every day though it would be possible, as the commune has a jeep and a minibus. Instead Qin lives in a commune dormitory and eats at the workers' canteen. He returns home for only a few days at a time, usually when he has to attend meetings in the county seat.

During the years when the gang of four was in power, there was immense pressure in many communes to boost the reputation of the "cultural revolution" by falsifying production output reports. Qin refused to drift with the tide, however, and only presented accurate figures on his commune's output. This caused Qianzhou to be dubbed a backward commune which higher authorities often criticized. Influenced by the ultra-Left line at that time, certain people also considered rural industry and sideline occupations as "developing capitalism," which brought further criticism to Qianzhou. Qin Jiahong found things difficult for a while, but since he felt sure that commune-run industry would help lead the countryside to prosperity, he stood up to the pressure and continued to promote it. His efforts were rewarded. The commune's industrial and sideline occupations developed substantially

during those years, agricultural output steadily increased and the commune members experienced a rapid improvement in their standard of living.

After the downfall of the gang of four in 1976, the Party and government drew up a set of agricultural policies suited to the actual conditions of the rural areas.* Now that the chaotic political movements and struggles of the past have ended, people are concentrating their energies on economic development and socialist modernization. They feel that prospects for developing the countryside are bright. But Qin is not unrealistic. "Although reform has begun and some work is progressing rather rapidly," he said, "a lot of problems remain."

"For instance," he observed, "there are not enough leaders with the scientific and technical knowledge necessary to meet the needs of agricultural modernization. Some cadres with little farming and management knowledge hold leading positions. Arbitrary orders are often given which can cause a great deal of harm. As I see it, the need for more study is an important challenge confronting cadres in the countryside today."

Qin also cited some of the past problems of rural industry. For example, the commune never knew how much steel, iron and machines would be available to it, as these items were only allocated according to a state plan in which the production needs of commune- and brigade-run enterprises were not included; so the commune always had to run here and there for help. Recently the state decided to broaden the role of market forces in the regulation of production and shift to a more flexible allo-

* In the Decision on Some Questions Concerning the Acceleration of Agricultural Development, approved by the Party Central Committee in the autumn of 1979, 25 policies and measures were formulated in an effort to arouse the initiative of the peasants.

cation system.* Qin Jiahong commented: "Things seem to be looking up for us."

"There are still many problems," he continued, "but we are forging ahead. Building up our countryside has just gotten started, there is still much to be done. I am sure the next few years will see even greater changes in our commune."

Brigade Head

Tang Jusheng, a tall, lean man of 43, joined the elementary agricultural co-operative after completing primary school in 1953. Three years later he became a cadre and in 1959 he joined the Communist Party. In 1966, he rose to Party branch secretary and head of the Xitang Production Brigade. But half a year later, he was held up for criticism as a "capitalist-roader," charged with paying too much attention to production and neglecting class struggle. As he remained unconvinced, Tang was dismissed from his post. Not until 1975 did he resume his job as Party branch secretary and brigade leader.

Heading a production brigade keeps Tang busy. Up at the first light of day, he is usually still eating breakfast when people start arriving with all sorts of problems. One recent morning, for instance, two brigade members came. One asked to work in the brigade's new sideline occupation — bird breeding; the other one asked about bricks for building a new house. After breakfast Tang usually goes

* Anshan Steel in northeast China, for instance, now has a retail shop selling surplus steel products to rural people's communes.

to the fields to see how the work is progressing and if there are any problems there. Back at the brigade office around eight a.m., he begins his routine administrative work. Afternoons find him making the rounds of the various production units again, unless there is a meeting to attend. He gives help when needed, usually putting in at least half a day's physical labour during busy seasons.

There are altogether some 2,300 people in Tang's brigade. Since it set up its own farm machinery and spray-dyeing equipment workshops in 1969 and began to develop sideline occupations, its income has grown steadily each year. There are also a number of semi-mechanized pig-farms, a two-storey chicken farm, fruit orchards and rows of new houses built by the brigade members themselves. Pig raising, poultry breeding, sericulture and fishing are doing especially well. Xitang is among the richer of the commune's 21 production brigades.

With more money, commune members first thought of building houses. By 1980, 388 apartments (each with five rooms) had been built in the brigade's four new villages. Members now pay nothing for seeing a doctor, having clothes made, sending their children to school, kindergarten or nursery, taking baths, getting haircuts and having their grain processed. Simple funerals are also free of charge.

In Tang Jusheng's newly built two-storey house live his 79-year-old mother, his wife Yu Binhua, who works in a commune-run factory, and their school-age son and daughter. In the old society, Tang Jusheng's father worked on a small plot rented from the local landlord. After paying the rent in kind, little grain was left for the family and catching fish was the only way they could get by. In the early post-liberation years, the family, with too many children and too few grown workers, had to depend on government aid to make ends meet. But by 1975 they were

doing well enough to build their new house, which cost them 2,400 yuan. Half of this sum was borrowed from relatives and friends and not paid off until 1978.

Tang's family earned a total of 2,700 yuan from the brigade in 1980 by taking part in collective labour. Private household sidelines, such as pig raising and chicken breeding, earned the family an additional 500 yuan. With plenty of grain in the bin and vegetables in store, the Tangs are no longer worried about food or money. And they are happy to be living in a house of their own.

Team Leader

Tang Weiming, a good-looking young man of 25, hurried back from the fields on his bicycle. At the end of 1978, he was elected leader of Qianzhou Production Brigade's No. 7 team. In February 1979, he became a member of the Communist Party. A 1973 graduate of junior middle school, he had been appointed in turn production team accountant, storekeeper and group leader. "As a team leader," he said, "I not only take care of production, but also see to team members' everyday problems. That isn't easy because I lack experience in so many things."

Young Tang occasionally referred to his notebook as he talked. He had recorded figures on distribution of manpower, sowing times, number of pigs, plans for digging an irrigation ditch and for building houses.... This production team head obviously had a good grasp of the team's work and the life of its members. His sincerity and hard work would certainly help him to fill in his work experience.

This was confirmed at a team committee discussion on how to fulfil their wheat plan. There were 11 committee members present, including deputy team leaders, the women's leader, work group heads, the accountant, storekeeper, agrotechnician and Youth League branch secretary. Tang began by systematically relaying to the committee members the directions from the brigade, explaining the present distribution of the team's manpower and how the work was progressing. He then raised several questions for discussion. It was a brief but lively meeting. Every member spoke up, and decisions were reached promptly.

The No. 7 production team is fairly large, with 567 people, 26.5 hectares of cultivated fields and facilities for sideline occupations as well. "In the past it was the commune and production brigade that had the final say in regard to the production plan of every team," Tang Weiming explained. "Now the production team has more power than before. It has complete control over such questions as what and how much to grow, how to increase output and bring the initiative of the team members into full play. The production team leader has much more to do than in the past."

Cadres at the brigade and team levels do not receive salaries from the state as do cadres at the commune level, but are credited with workpoints like other commune members. Those who work more receive more workpoints; so the greater the team's collective productivity, the higher the cash value of the workpoints and the greater the individual income.

Tang Weiming, his father, brother and sister all contribute to the team's labour force. At the end of the year they now receive more than 1,500 kilogrammes of food grain, over a dozen kilogrammes of edible oil and certain other agricultural produce. After paying for these

items they still have around 2,800 yuan left over. Tang's mother cooks and does other housework for the family while also raising several pigs, which earns the family an additional 300 yuan each year.

Tang's grandfather died early, and his grandmother had to work as a servant in a rich family before liberation to support herself and her son, Tang's father. With few resources of their own, the Tangs thus lived fairly poorly for a long time. In recent years, however, they have been able to put money aside to build a house. Tang is engaged to a girl who works in the commune's hospital and they plan to marry when the new house is built.

Old Peasant

Du Jinnan, typical of old peasants in southern China, has a face the colour of copper from long exposure to the sun. A normal evening these days usually finds him outdoors, wearing his woollen skullcap and old padded coat, watering the family's private plot of land; his wife boils pig-feed while his sons and sons-in-law do other chores around their newly built two-storey house.

He found a lot to say at the mention of the old society. His family had made a living by working land rented from a landlord. Apart from their tiny plot and dilapidated little house, the family had nothing of its own.

In the early 1950s after liberation, Du was active in the agricultural co-operative movement, and was once the village head. But his children were all very young and life was still hard for the family.

All the children have grown up now and take part in collective labour. The Dus' eldest son is a bricklayer, the second is a veterinarian and their third and fourth sons are farm workers. There are also three daughters who work as sales clerk, chicken farmer and farm labourer respectively. Du himself, now 60, works at the brigade's irrigation and drainage pumping station, while his wife takes care of the large family and does sideline work. The Du family raises eels, pigs, chickens, goats, ducks, rabbits and ground beetles (used in traditional Chinese medicine) for the free market. All hard workers, they made 4,500 yuan from collective labour in 1980 (after deductions for grain, edible oil and certain vegetables). With more than 1,000 yuan earned annually from family sideline endeavours, they now live much more comfortably than before.

Du Jinnan is eloquent on the subject of domestic sideline occupations. "A few years ago there were all sorts of restrictions on kitchen gardens. If you grew more than 15 head of cabbage a season, kids would be sent to pull them up. It was really maddening!" he said.

The Dus' second daughter added: "At that time all family sidelines were labelled 'capitalist.' We almost forgot what meat tasted like!"

"Now things are different," Du Jinnan continued. "So long as our private endeavours don't interfere with collective labour, we commune members are allowed to take up whatever sideline occupations we find suitable. It may seem strange when you come to think of it — the amount of land is the same and the number of people has increased, yet we have more than we did a few years ago. The main reason is that the present policy, allowing sideline occupations like ours, provides a better life for the family and supplies the market with needed goods. We

don't hire or exploit anyone, so how can it be called capitalism?"

A Worker - Peasant Family

There are 10 people in the Wu family of Qianzhou Production Brigade: Wu Mingshen and his wife, three sons, three daughters-in-law and two grandchildren. Except for the eldest son, who works at the state-run Wuxi Food Company, all are employed in factories run by the commune or brigade. The living quarters are divided into four separate flats, built by the family members themselves. Each flat has four rooms, a kitchen, a storeroom and a large balcony linking it with the other flats. The Wus are a comparatively well-off extended family.

All of the family except for the eldest son gather nightly around a big table for the evening meal, which usually consists of several different meat and vegetable dishes and rice. Wu Mingshen, 51, worked at the Wuxi Flour Mill before liberation. In those days, he also served as an underground messenger for the Communists, and in 1952 he joined the Party. He is now in charge of supply and marketing in the brigade's printing and dyeing equipment factory. The second and third Wu sons both work in the brigade's hardware factory; the daughters-in-law work separately in the brigade's printing house, embroidery shop and radio component factory.

Ordinarily these people work at their respective factory jobs, but during busy farming seasons (about three months out of each year) they return to their production teams to take part in agriculture. They have no fixed

wage income during these months, but earn workpoints like other commune members and receive the money-equivalent at the end of the year when the cash value of workpoints is calculated. Every peasant-worker also receives a subsidy from their factory of 0.15 yuan for each day they work in the agricultural sector, and bonuses are given at the end of the year as reward for good work.

Mrs. Wu, who still handles the entire family's finances, said she recently suggested that each small family keep its own accounts. But the sons and daughters-in-law objected, saying they consider Grandma a good manager and hope she will continue as before, with them handing their earnings over to her.

Seeing to it that each family member is well fed and properly dressed is Mrs. Wu's main responsibility. She also raises pigs, and last year sold 13 to the state. With family savings and money left over after building the apartments, she bought furniture, a sewing machine and a radio for each of the four homes as well as a TV set for the entire household. Mrs. Wu loves flowers, and her pots of chrysanthemums in the rooms and courtyard lend an atmosphere of quiet beauty to the home.

"We live a happy family life," she said. "My sons and daughters-in-law get along well together, and in general they respect my opinions. We settle family matters through discussion and co-operation. There have never really been any big family rows."

After supper, the family often settles down in front of the television to watch a movie or football match. Wu Mingshen jokes with his two grandchildren, who obviously love it. Their giggles and squeals can usually be heard ringing out above the sound of the TV.

* * *

Generally speaking, the level of production and living

standards in China's countryside are low. Qianzhou Commune fares better than most. But everywhere in the country the peasants' livelihood is guaranteed. Now that a political situation of stability has emerged throughout the country, with people concentrating their efforts on socialist modernization, it can be expected that future development in the countryside will be faster — making life in the people's communes richer and more colourful with each passing year.

— by Jin Hua

Inside A Shanghai Factory

Of China's 377,000 industrial enterprises, 83,000 are state-run, employing 32 million workers and staff members.

The following story about a state-run bicycle factory describes the life of the employees there and answers the question of how such an enterprise is run.

Inside a Shanghai Factory

ACCORDING to the latest statistics, there is a bike for every 10 Chinese, but demand is still rising. China concentrates on developing public transport. At present, there are no privately owned motorcars, and bicycles (including motor bikes) are the main personal means of transportation in the cities and in flatland rural areas.

"The bicycle is the key product of our bureau and it sells well," said a representative of the Light Industrial Bureau in Shanghai as he pointed to the steady stream of bicycles moving along the streets.

Makers of Yongjiu Bicycles

In Shanghai, China's biggest industrial city, there is the Shanghai Bicycle Factory producing the *Yongjiu* (Forever) brand, the No. 3 Bicycle Plant, maker of the *Fenghuang* (Phoenix), the No. 4 Bicycle Plant turning out mini-bikes, and there are seven factories manufacturing spare parts. The municipal light industrial bureau has

set up a number of specialized companies to handle the many trades under it, including a bicycle company which sets the state-planned targets* for the city's bicycle factories and monitors production results.

High Reputation

The Shanghai Bicycle Plant is located in the Yangpu District, ten kilometres north of the city centre.

Among its 4,200 workers and staff members, 1,200 are women, 500 are Party members and another 500 are Youth League members. About one-fourth (more than 1,000) are under 25. They work eight hours a day in three shifts. Under an eight grade wage system, the monthly pay for the highest grade is 120 yuan and the lowest is 42 yuan (not including various welfare subsidies). Bonuses are also given according to the socialist principle of "to each according to his work" and more pay for more work.

Bicycles made here include standard types, heavy-duty bikes for rural use, roadsters, multi-geared racers and dual-driven (motor and pedal) bicycles, totalling 17 varieties. Its products sell well throughout the country with a small number for export. The plant enjoys a reputation in the nation's bicycle industry for high output and quality, low production costs and wide variety.

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*Note: These include specifications for variety, output and quality of products, labour productivity, production costs, material consumption, turnover rate of circulating capital and profits to be handed over to the state.

Factory Structure

Party committee
This consists of a secretary, two deputy secretaries and eight committee members. Under the political department (an administrative body of the factory Party committee), there are the organizational and propaganda sections and a section in charge of organizing and training the worker militia; the political department also supervises the work of the trade union, the Youth League committee and the factory-run school.

Factory directors
The director, assisted by four deputies, heads the factory management. This consists of the general office plus ten sections in charge of production, planning, safety, quality control, wages, etc.

Trade union
This is a working-class mass organization under Party leadership. Union membership is voluntary.

Workers' congress
This is the organ of authority in the democratic management of an enterprise. Elected by the workers themselves, the congress representatives meet at regular intervals to consider and decide major factory issues and elect or nominate leading administrative personnel. Workers' representatives may also direct criticism towards leaders

and even suggest their removal for unsatisfactory service.

This factory has eight workshops operating under the director's unified leadership, each workshop being subdivided into sections, shifts and groups.

From Little to Big

The factory grew out of a workshop set up by a Japanese merchant in 1940, with 200 workers and employees producing 26-inch bicycles at that time. In 1948, in the last days of Kuomintang rule on the Chinese mainland, its output was 3,000 bicycles of poor quality.

Between 1950 and 1977, hard work and technical innovations raised the factory's output by more than 20 per cent each year till it reached 1.8 million in 1979 (see table). Daily output is greater now than two years' production before liberation. Accumulated profits the factory has turned over to the state in the past 30 years amount to 1,000 million yuan, 26.5 times the total state investment in the plant.

While "growing up," the factory has been concerned about retaining its fine tradition of hard work. Except for the four-storey building put up in 1975, the factory

BICYCLE OUTPUT

1949	*1952*	*1958*	*1966*	*1976*
4,373	28,767	315,382	541,515	1,300,546

1977	*1978*	*1979*	*1980*
1,458,492	1,700,176	1,800,000	1,960,000

still operates in one-storey buildings. The workers and cadres are proud to do their best to advance national construction and do not grumble about poor conditions. They have used most of their investment funds over the years for expanding production and introducing automation in half of the production processes, such as electroplating, painting and heat treatment.

Factory Director Li

The factory director, Li Linfu, gets up regularly at 5:00 in the morning, goes to the market for the evening's food and returns home to prepare it with his wife. Mrs. Li is a textile worker.

A Busy Day

Li has breakfast at six while listening to the radio news and weather broadcast, then goes to work by trolley bus. Arriving at the factory at seven, he dusts his office and does a little self-study of English before getting down to the day's work. He lunches at the workers' canteen. The workers knock off at four p.m., but he usually stays on until six. On returning home he frequently enjoys some mild Shaoxing rice wine, drunk warm, with the evening meal. "It soaks up the day's fatigue," he says.

Director Li, who comes from a small county town in Zhejiang Province near Shanghai, became an apprentice in a small grocery at 13. After liberation, he was able to complete senior middle school courses in a spare-time night school. Now 48 and a man of position, he still dresses

simply and remains close to the workers. He receives a monthly salary of 96 yuan, slightly less than the maximum for a skilled worker. His wife earns 60 yuan a month. Li is a Party member and, like most, strives to be the first to undertake hard work and the last to enjoy comfort. His four-member family lives in one room and an attic.

This factory director is always eager to improve the well-being of the workers. Now that factories are granted greater freedom and have 5 per cent of their profits at their own disposal, he is sponsoring a major housing project for the workers. Some units have been completed, and the housing shortage is being eased.

Li Linfu has the duty to ensure fulfilment of production quotas in respect to output, quality and profits and therefore, besides office work, he calls frequent meetings to study problems concerning production and the workers' welfare. And, as deputy secretary of the factory Party committee, he meets regularly with the committee. There are also meetings with his four deputies and with workshop and section heads to co-ordinate production tasks.

Much of his time, however, is spent making investigations at the grass-roots level, inspecting workshops, listening to cadres' and workers' opinions, spotting problems and helping if possible to solve them. Major problems he brings before the Party committee, factory management, or workers' congress for solutions through collective effort.

Progress

Production developed unevenly in the past, was slack early in the month and hurried at the end. Workers were unhappy at being asked to speed up when the month-end drew near. But the ultra-Left thinking at that time brand-

ed labour rules and regulations as "revisionist trash" which shackled workers, and it was impossible for the factory leaders to run the enterprise efficiently. Early in 1977, Director Li decided the time had come to solve this problem.

He knew that, in a socialist enterprise, issuing blind orders or using coercion and punishment would not solve the problem. So, in the tradition of the Party's mass line, he organized the workers and cadres to discuss this anomaly, look into its causes and work out a solution. The result included a time schedule for the various work processes, bolstered by specific and serious rules and regulations.

Improving the quality of products has been a major task for China's industrial enterprises in recent years. Consumers once had a low opinion of the factory's No. 17 type bicycle, yet the factory leaders could not pinpoint what was wrong. Director Li went with factory engineers, quality control supervisors, workshop heads and workers' representatives to several distributors of their No. 17 and asked shop assistants and customers what the complaints were. Some said the price was too high considering the quality. The paint job was poor, some parts did not fit well, and screws dropped off. One customer asked right out: "Don't you want your bicycles to sell? Don't you feel any responsibility to the consumer? Tell your director to come and listen to some of our complaints." This made Director Li's cheeks crimson.

Back at the factory, Li and the others discussed the matter and worked out 58 measures for improving the quality of their products. The No. 17 type bicycle now rates high in quality, and the factory leaders continue their investigation tours at regular intervals.

More Problems

But problems are many. The demand for bicycles is great, yet the faetory has very limited space. Almost every square foot of its floor space and grounds is piled with parts, tyres and bicycle frames, with scarcely room to walk through. Electricity and certain components are also in short supply. As a Chinese saying goes: "The cleverest cook can't produce a meal without rice."

"There are many problems facing a factory director, and I often find myself appealing to higher-ups, though in the main we try to solve the problems ourselves. We want to reach production targets and do even more," Li said.

He felt certain of success because of current structural reforms in economic management, devolution of administrative power, and ongoing economic readjustment promising to give priority to light industry, including bicycle production.

Veteran Worker Cao Xiaogou

"There are now large, motorized ferries to take people across the Huangpu River to work*. But before liberation, we relied mainly on sampans. This took a lot of time, and was dangerous in a high wind," said a veteran worker named "Xiaogou" from his seat on a newly painted ferry.

* There is also a 1,300-metre underwater tunnel open to limited motor traffic.

"Xiaogou"

His name, which means "Little Dog," indicates his poor family background. In the old society, the infant mortality rate was so high among the working people that they often gave their children degrading names, hoping it might in some way help them survive under their subhuman living conditions.

At 14 Cao took a job in the Japanese-owned workshop that was the predecessor of this factory. His father, who had been the family's breadwinner, had been working in a cigarette factory. But on the way to work one morning in 1943, the sampan he was riding was hit and sunk in a Japanese air raid. The father was drowned. And so, driven by poverty, Cao Xiaogou started working while still a boy. After taking a sampan he had to walk for an hour or so every day to get to the workshop.

"I worked bare from the waist up, making front and rear axles and drilling holes. By night I was grimy and exhausted." Since liberation, however, he has been cited as an advanced worker for improving the free wheel of the bicycle and awarded a tour abroad as prize.

From where 50-year-old Cao and his family now live, it takes half an hour (including the time on the ferry) to get to the factory by bike. It is quieter here than in the busy downtown district. The Cao home is a plain four-room, two-storey brick house with a floor space of 54 square metres. On the ground floor are the sitting-dining room, a bedroom for their daughter, who is a nurse in a nearby hospital, and a kitchen near the back door. The Cao couple and their two sons, primary and middle school pupils, live upstairs. The rooms are simply but comfortably furnished; a sofa, cane chairs and a radio are in the sitting

room, while upstairs are a 12-inch black-and-white TV set and a sewing machine. Two bicycles provide transportation for the father and daughter to get to their work places.

The living conditions of the Cao family are considered good, in view of retarded economic development due to recent social turmoil in China. Further, the policy for construction in the past did not give adequate attention to living conditions, especially urban housing. This is gradually changing now.

Mrs. Cao, whose own name is Liang Gendi, is chairman of the trade union at a nearby paper mill. Her factory employs 1,300 workers and staff.

She had also begun work as a child of 14. But in order to get a job then in the paper mill, she had said she was 19. "I worked squatting outdoors, picking over rags," she recalled. "When it rained there was only a tattered umbrella for protection."

Life Improves

The Caos were married in 1954 and the factory where Cao works put up the house for them. It belongs to them and they paid for it in instalments.

Mrs. Cao and her husband together earn 175 yuan a month. Their daughter has an independent income. Their household expenses for water, electricity, coal and house tax amount to less than ten yuan a month. The family has a good diet, with enough money for new clothing and household furnishings, and something left over for their "nest egg" in the bank.

Like most veteran workers who had a hard time in the old society, the Cao family is quite happy with its present life, especially with the political stability in which people can work with one heart for China's modernization and the better life that it will mean for her people.

Engineer Dong Zicheng

It was the factory's day off, but engineer Dong Zicheng set out for his work place at 5:00 in the morning. He had an appointment with three workers to check the electroplating machine.

A few days earlier bubbles had been found in the electroplating fluid, lowering the quality of the plating process. After careful investigation, Dong suspected this was due to a tiny amount of lubricant leaking into the container. To find where the lubricant came from, the four dismantled the machine and got into the pipes, emerging only at noon, covered with dirt and dripping with sweat. But they had found out what they wanted to know.

Twenty-Three Years

"Doing extra jobs on holidays and at night is quite common for me," said 49-year-old, bespectacled Dong. He was promoted from technician to engineer in 1978.

A chemistry major in college, he started to work in the bicycle factory in 1957. He designed the first automatic electroplating machine in 1958, and improving these machines has been his main concern ever since. The one they were working on is his 12th, a 48.6-metre-long electroplating machine incorporating 20 procedures. Bicycle wheel rims and other metal parts placed in the machine are cleansed of dirt and rust and then put through five different plating processes. Dong is proud of it. "The biggest ever made in China," he said factually.

Dong also heads a 14-member technical team which is working on improving the techniques of plating, painting, welding, heat-treatment and three other technical processes. Dong said: "I spend most of my time with workers and technicians in the workshops checking things on the spot. That's one thing an engineer should do."

A Busy Man

Asked how he spends the rest of his time, Dong said: "Well, I teach a class of workers and take part in academic activities arranged by the municipal and district authorities." He leads the metal-plating section of the city anti-corrosion society and the district electroplating group. He also works at night, writing papers on electroplating or

translating articles from foreign magazines for Chinese science and technology journals.

On weekends Dong shares in the housework, cleaning up the room and replenishing the coal supply. His wife teaches at the Institute of Chemical Engineering. Their combined monthly income is 159 yuan. This is not a small sum by Chinese standard. Yet his family of four has to make do with a 20-square-metre room.

He responded to the comment that he certainly has a full schedule with a smile. "We need better technology if we're to modernize. Our electroplating technique is still not what it should be. And it will take hard work to catch up. Like other intellectuals, we technicians were branded during the 'cultural revolution' as part of the 9th category. We were obstructed in every effort, and we were unhappy. Now the Party has made it clear that we intellectuals are a part of the working class. This brings us into a close and comradely relationship with the workers. I don't mind getting tired."

In China today the engineers and technicians of Dong's generation play an important role. The Party recognizes this and has adopted a policy towards intellectuals designed to stimulate their enthusiasm and creativity.

Admittedly, Dong's living conditions and salary are far from ideal. What is encouraging is that the government and public opinion are now focusing on these problems. As China's economy develops, his family's situation will improve and it will be easier working for the four modernizations.

Young Woman Worker Yao Peihua

Yao Peihua sailed into the office as though on air. She is 23 and attractive in her work cap, with a curl showing beneath it on her forehead.

Getting Into The Work

Yao Peihua entered this bicycle factory in May 1976, a year after graduating from a Shanghai middle school. She was assigned to a welding group of 30 — one of four new girls on that job.

She found the work pretty tiring at first, constantly bending and turning while grasping an electrode holder. She sometimes got a painful drop of boric acid on her hand. The worst thing, however, was that the welding group had come under anarchist influence and was undisciplined. Work usually got started an hour late, and they knocked off at least an hour early to take a shower. The

average output per worker was 640 frames welded per shift (eight hours), which was far below the factory norm.

Then the four girls in the group did a surprising thing — that September they proposed overfulfilling the norm. The challenge was like throwing a stone in a pond. The girls received warnings from well-meaning persons, one of whom said: "You've only just come and yet you want to raise the norm. Don't you think you're asking for trouble?" Some others said the girls were just trying to show off. Yao Peihua was nervous as she rose to formally state their proposal at the workshop meeting, but she mounted the platform anyway.

An Urge to Study

What happened? After the fall of the gang of four a month later (October 1976), normal order was gradually restored and production levels went up steadily. One year later, each worker was welding an average of 800 frames per shift, up from 640, but quality was still poor.

At a quality testing exhibition held by the Ministry of Light Industry in 1978, the rear frame of a bicycle turned out by their factory was found to be badly joined and the director was criticized on the spot. The welding had been done by workers in Yao Peihua's group, who were quite shocked and thereafter decided to pay more attention to quality. They sought instruction from technicians, and a drive got under way to improve technique.

"I had to learn," Yao Peihua explained. "I worked as a welder for several years without ever really understanding the underlying principles and rules of welding."

She said that when the group first tried to improve quality, output dropped from 800 to 500 frames per worker

per day. Even so there were still rejects, including frames welded by Yao Peihua. This was discouraging, but she made up her mind to study harder and improve.

Quality rose, and daily output per worker was gradually raised to 800 high-quality frames. The group was commended as an advanced unit, and Yao Peihua was named a "March 8th"* factory pace-setter, along with two women from other workshops.

Young Working Women's Life

When asked about her income, Yao Peihua replied that her monthly wage of 43 yuan quite covers her needs. She lives with her grandmother and aunt as her parents work outside the city.

On the day shift, she leaves home at 5:45 and arrives at the factory at 6:30 to prepare for the shift, which starts at 7:00. Work is over at 4:00 p.m. but she seldom knocks off that early. She checks work already done, and sometimes re-welds frames that are not done well. "Sometimes I lend a hand to other groups," she said cheerfully.

Yao Peihua is also an activist in the workshop's Youth League branch. She likes dancing and reciting poetry. Twice a week she attends a mathematics class in the factory's spare-time school. She makes the acquaintance of young men, but has no "steady" yet and thinks of marriage as a future concern.

Yao Peihua represents the factory's advanced young workers of whom there are quite a few. There are also the less advanced, and even some whose primary aim is

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* Note: March 8 is International Working Women's Day.

frankly to "enjoy life" in their own way. Youth League members like Yao Peihua try to help these wayward workers, mainly by setting an example. They believe that most will be encouraged to become active members of the society as more and more people around them really work for the four modernizations.

— *by Xiang Rong*

Epilogue

In early May 1981, one and half years after filing his initial report, *Beijing Review* correspondent Xiang Rong returned to the Shanghai Bicycle Plant for an update. His findings:

National economic readjustment in the last two years has sought to strengthen the production of consumer goods, entailing a significant de-emphasis of heavy industry. Production tasks at a number of heavy industrial plants in Shanghai, including the No. 6 Valve Plant and the Fengshou (Rich Harvest) Tractor Plant, have been drastically reduced as a result. In contrast, the Shanghai Bicycle Plant, operating at full capacity, has still been unable to keep up with the growing demand for its products due to limited facilities and equipment.

The municipal economic leadership has therefore decided to convert the near-idle heavy industrial factories into bicycle producers. The No. 6 Valve Plant, after a brief period of reorganization and retraining of its cadres and workers, will be permanently amalgamated with the Shanghai Bicycle Plant. The Fengshou Tractor facilities

will undergo a similar readjustment before starting production of Yongjiu bicycles; it will retain its independent management, however, and simply co-operate with the Shanghai Bicycle Plant on equipment and technical expertise.

Another recent development here was the appointment of veteran worker Wang Yuanchang to the factory directorship following the transfer of his predecessor to another post in 1979. The new leader started working in this factory in 1946 as a boy of 14, gradually rising up through the ranks over the years from assembler to bench worker to electroplater and finally to cadre and factory director. Now 49, with broad experience in Youth League, trade union and Party committee work behind him, Wang Yuanchang is a capable administrator and public servant. Among the workers here, he is respected and well-liked.

Signs of progress are abundant. Shortly after Wang Yuanchang assumed office, one of the factory's top bicycles, the Yongjiu No. 12 model, fell to sixth place in a national quality-comparison exhibition. Instead of searching for someone to blame, however, the new director patiently set out to determine the model's defects and have them corrected. Workers and technicians were mobilized to study the No. 12 and work out measures for its improvement, which resulted in a new automatic painting device and an electric heat treatment that boosted the quality and strength of the model considerably. At the 1980 bicycle exhibition, the No. 12 model rose to second place.

Further, in a 1980 drive to increase overall production and improve quality and efficiency, more than 170 technical innovations were implemented throughout the factory. Output was boosted to 1.96 million that year and profits tax paid to the state topped 100 million yuan. Efforts

to improve the material life of the workers continued; two new 5-storey apartment buildings were completed in 1980, providing better living conditions for 162 factory families. Construction work on two additional housing projects has already begun, with completion expected sometime in late 1981.

With its new director, forthcoming expansion and already superior level of output and efficiency, the Shanghai Bicycle Plant is on its way to a prosperous future.

Out on The Grassland

A good part of Inner Mongolia, Gansu, Qinghai, Xinjiang and Tibet — which together make up nearly one half of China's territory — is pastoral land. The herdsmen there are no longer nomadic, but they still lead a way of life quite different from the rest of the Chinese people. While this report focuses on life on the grassland of Inner Mongolia, it is representative of the larger picture.

Out on the Grassland of Inner Mongolia

FOR generations, Mongolian herdsmen roamed the vast prairies in constant search of water and grass for their livestock. The nomadic life was free, but hardships were great and existence always insecure. Today, life on the grassland of the Inner Mongolian Autonomous Region is more settled. Most people pass the bitter winters in small communities of houses and yurts, feeding their herds from large stores of hay and relying on the snow for drinking water. When the snow and ice melt in spring, the herdsmen pack up their belongings and move to graze their cattle and sheep on new pastures. By harvest time, after a summer of feasting on fresh forage grass, the sheep are fat and the cattle and horses are healthy and strong.

Grassland covers a good part of the autonomous region's total area, offering excellent pastures for its 363 livestock-raising communes. For example, of the 37,000 inhabitants of East Ujimqin Banner (equivalent to a county), which extends over an area of 35,354 square kilometres, 25,000 people are engaged in herding and breeding livestock. The water resources and forage grass are rich and abundant here. The horses bred in this region are also some of the finest in the country, while its fat-tailed

sheep yield succulent mutton served in Beijing's best restaurants.

East Ujimqin Banner consists of 14 communes, each with a dozen or more full-time cadres overseeing production, civil administration, education, public health, culture and militia work. Unlike the more densely populated areas in China, a commune here comprises only three to five production teams which function as the basic accounting units for all collective labour. A production team is made up of several work teams divided into small, scattered clusters of yurts and livestock facilities. Most people here, including the cadres, are of the Mongolian nationality; in this banner, 82 per cent of the cadres at the highest level and almost all the cadres in the communes and production teams are Mongolian.

Inside a Mongolian Yurt

Xinuma and her husband and children are one of 78 families in the Hanwula Production Team of Shamai Commune. Forty-three years old and a mother of eight, she watches over the newborn lambs at night, in addition to keeping up with numerous household responsibilities. Only the youngest two of her children still live at home.

Now that spring is here, Xinuma's 48-year-old husband Alatengge is already out on the prairie tending sheep for the production team. Their daughter-in-law and eldest daughter also tend cattle and sheep for the collective. The eldest son, just married, is a veterinarian in the production team and the second son is engaged in part-time medical work and part-time animal husbandry. The couple's other

Administrative Division of the Inner Mongolian Autonomous Region

Region
|
League
|
Banner
|
Commune
|
Production Team

two sons and a daughter are away studying in a commune-run boarding school.

After lighting the yurt's stove with some dried cow dung and treating her guests to milk tea, Xinuma started talking about the team's recently revived system of management. Abolished during the "cultural revolution" (1966-1976) and re-established only in 1979, the current arrangement consists of fixed work quotas and a system of rewards for overfulfilment of production targets. In addition to

receiving workpoints for tending cattle and sheep, herdsmen must now maintain the livestock at a yearly death rate of no more than 3 per cent and ensure that 90 per cent of the newborn animals survive. Should the herdsmen surpass these quotas, they can keep the additional animals for their own private herds, the size of which is not restricted. But, in the event that the herdsmen cannot meet their quotas, deductions will be taken from their workpoints. This system has already helped to boost production and arouse greater enthusiasm among the herdsmen.

After spelling out the generalities of this responsibility system, Xinuma went on to describe how her family fared under this system last year. They gained 18 new sheep for taking care of 1,000 head of commune sheep, a considerable increase to the 30 sheep, two horses, two cows and one calf they already owned. After deducting expenses for meat and grain, the household earned a net income of 1,500 yuan in 1980. This income, combined with their savings, enabled them to buy a new yurt at a cost of 1,800 yuan plus a whole set of furnishings for the yurt, as well as pay other wedding costs for their eldest son.

The new yurt is the pride and treasure of the newlyweds. Its roof and walls are made of thick layers of felt, with a floor covering of soft furs and carpets. There is a clock, a transistor radio and a sewing machine in the yurt, and the quilts on the felt rug are made of colourful silks and satins.

Xinuma concluded on an optimistic note, saying that the prospects for this lambing season were quite good. Of the 400 pregnant ewes, three-fourths had already lambed and all of the newborns were hale and hearty.

New Settlements

Queriga, another member of the Hanwula Production Team, settled down permanently two years ago. He and his wife are getting old now. Both nearly 60, they are no longer able to support themselves through their own labour. They therefore depend on their son and daughter, who tend 60 of the team's oxen. Their daughter is 19, and the son, Tumennasutu, 26, was married last September.

Queriga sat on the *kang* (a heated brick platform bed) of his three-room brick home and talked about the benefits of having settled down. He described his original misgivings, how he had been afraid that he would not be able to adapt himself to such a life because he had always roamed the grasslands freely. But he had discovered that settling down has its merits. When the strong wind is wailing outside on cold winter nights, Queriga now relaxes on his warm *kang* and smokes his pipe in comfort. His animals, too, are no longer subject to the harsh winds and snow, for they are housed in well-built cowsheds situated next to his home. His main concern is seeing that the livestock are fed on time, and even the burden of this strenuous task has been greatly lightened by the use of mowers and tractors in the banner which transport forage grass for feeding his oxen. Not one of his animals has died in the last two years. As a result of these improvements, the old herdsman is free of many former worries and his health is better now too.

Queriga and his wife are part of a growing trend throughout the grasslands to settle down and enjoy the

advantages of a permanent residence. The state encourages these settlements by allocating funds to the production teams, which also contribute part of their own welfare funds, for building houses and livestock facilities. In the Hanwula Production Team, 108 brick houses and 45 cowsheds have been built, though this number is still short of the demand.

A Wedding on the Prairie

Queriga's son, Tumennasutu, and his wife talked somewhat shyly about their recent courtship and marriage. She grew up in the Salt Lake region some 100 kilometres from the Hanwula Production Team. One of Queriga's relatives lives there, so Tumennasutu would often ride over on horseback for a visit. This was how he came to meet and fall in love with his future wife.

As the two families live quite far apart, they held the wedding feast at a spot between the two homes where there is plenty of water and grass. All the guests arrived on horseback or by cart and helped set up yurts at the designated spot. Then everyone sat eating, drinking and singing to the tune of the Mongolian "horse-headed fiddle" all evening. In the small hours of the morning, the couple and their young friends went on horseback to the bride's home for the wedding ceremony, which was followed by a horse race and more drinking and singing. The parties and celebration went on for three days.

The family of Tumennasutu's wife has prospered over the years. They gave their daughter a brand-new *Hama* cart equipped with rubber tyres and a felt roof as well as

a covered wagon, a sewing machine, clothes for all seasons, boots, stockings and other trousseau items.

According to the local custom, a woman does not expect wedding gifts from the man's family, as the Han Chinese living in the countryside usually do. Instead, the parents of the bride give her as large a trousseau as possible, as well as various gifts for the bridegroom; in return, the bridegroom is only expected to present his new mother-in-law with a milch cow, as a token gift. This custom dates back to the 13th century, when Lamaism spread from Tibet to Mongolia and many families sent their sons to lamaseries. At that time, if a family had three sons, at least one would have to serve as a lama. Since lamas could not marry, there was a surplus of unmarried women, which led to the custom of parents giving their daughters large dowries. After liberation, many lamas chose to resume secular life and most young men were not willing to become lamas thereafter. But customs shaped over many centuries do not change overnight. Consequently, the size of a dowry is still taken today as an indication of the social status of an unmarried woman.

Team Leader

Hubisihalatu, the young leader of the Hanwula Production Team, lives with his wife and two children in one room in a row of single-storey brick and wood houses. One of three candidates nominated by the local team members, Hubisihalatu was elected team head by a majority vote last March. People generally supported him because of his abilities in managing production.

Hubisihalatu commented that herdsmen and their families here earn more and live better than most peasants engaged in agriculture. In 1980, collective animal husbandry in his team earned each worker 517 yuan, about average for this banner. This translates into a per capita income of 248 yuan, twice that of the average peasant in most other parts of China. Add to that earnings from private livestock, hunting and bonuses, and the total income is much higher. Almost every home now has carpets, a sewing machine and a radio set, with wristwatches and several outfits of beautiful coloured silk for most adult family members.

In this area, however, as elsewhere throughout the autonomous region, demand for manufactured goods far exceeds supply. Hubisihalatu said that at the supply and marketing co-operative of the Shamai Commune, goods like woollen blankets, wooden beds, knitting wool, riding boots and tape recorders always sell out quickly. With no small-scale industry at the team or commune level and little industry in the seat of the banner, people here depend on shipments from other parts of the country for their manufactured products, which almost always fall short of the amount needed. This situation is expected to gradually improve, however, along with the current emphasis on light industry and increased production of consumer goods.

After a dinner of beef, mutton and various dairy products, the main diet in this region, the team leader began talking about the cultural life of the grassland people. Mongolians generally love to sing and dance, and hold great parties at harvest time. Every summer, there is a traditional fair called Nadamu (meaning "to amuse oneself"), where horse racing, archery, wrestling and other contests of skill are held. Many stores are set up, selling silks, satins and other goods, and people come from miles

around to shop and join in the entertainment. The Nadamu fair also provides an occasion for young people to look for marriage partners. They dress up in their best and show off a bit.

One can also see performances by the Ulanmuchi (mobile art troupe) at the fair. First founded in 1956, the troupe soon became well known for its colourful operas, dancing and acrobatics, which were brought to all corners of the prairie on horseback. The idea of mobile troupes has since become quite popular; now every banner in Inner Mongolia has a travelling art troupe of ten or twenty performers, though today they travel mainly by truck. Last year, the troupe of East Ujimqin Banner gave more than 80 performances.

From City Girl to Country Woman

There are four young women from Beijing who married herdsmen in the Dabusilatu Production Team of Daomudegebi Commune. Part of a nationwide move-

ment of city youth who went to rural areas both to teach and learn from the people there, these girls arrived in 1968 after graduating from junior middle school. In the whole banner, there are now 21 educated young people from Beijing and Tianjin who came to settle and work among the local inhabitants.

Zhang Li, one of the four Beijing women in this team, is the daughter of two scientists. Now 30 and still wearing braids as when she first came, she has the same youthful look about her, though a few fine lines have begun to appear on her expressive face.

Sugula, her husband, is two years older than she. He became a shepherd when he was nine and received only a few days' schooling as a child. A good labourer, he enjoys playing chess and singing to the tune of his own fiddle in his free time. Their daughter Erdenggereyue ("Brilliant Gem") now lives with her maternal grandparents and attends primary school in Beijing. Zhang Li and Sugula presently tend a flock of stud rams for the team, and keep some milch cows, sheep, chickens and dogs for themselves.

If not for her Beijing accent and rather thin build, nobody would know Zhang Li is not Mongolian. She speaks the Mongolian language fluently now and has learnt to make many of the necessities of life on the grassland herself, such as a Mongolian gown, heavy woollen socks for winter, rope halters and a delicious concoction made of fermented mare's milk. Like the other urban youth who settled in this region, she learnt all the skills of herding from the local people, while also bringing in certain ideas and living habits from the outside. For example, influence of these urban youth has helped to dispel certain superstitions around bathing and eating habits that were prevalent here in the past.

Boarding Schools

The development of education in the pastoral areas is still far from satisfactory. The uneducated older generation which learnt to read during the early post-liberation literacy campaigns has been succeeded by many young illiterates. The 19-year-old daughter of Queriga mentioned earlier is clever and capable, but she has not received a single day of schooling.

During the "cultural revolution," efforts were made to bring school to the student through "school on horseback" and various other kinds of mobile educational projects. Unfortunately, these endeavours were largely unsuccessful; since communities in the pastoral areas are usually quite scattered and distant from one another, and as many children travel with the herdsmen in spring and summertime, the teachers simply could not find their pupils. In view of this, educational departments are now making efforts to set up boarding schools throughout the region. The state provides the lion's share of the expenses, while the communes and production teams pay for the tuition fees out of their public welfare funds.

The primary school of the Daomudegebi Commune was built last year and already has an enrolment of 202 students, including 93 girls. The students all live at the school, returning to see their families on vacations a few times each year. Twelve teachers and five child-care attendants, all Mongolian, guarantee that the pupils receive a good education. Textbooks are printed in the Mongolian language; in their fourth year pupils will begin studying

Chinese. Since it opened last November, the school has enrolled 94 per cent of the commune's children between the ages of 8 and 12.

Other communes have built or are now building schools similar to this one.

Improving Health Care For All

At the clinic of the Daomudegebi Commune, there are eight doctors responsible for five production teams ranging over an area of some 3,000 square kilometres. If a patient is unable to come to the clinic, a doctor is sent to his home to give treatment.

A great deal of work is also undertaken by the team co-operative medical stations and special health centres for women and children. These are run by part-time medical workers and midwives with adequate training for most ordinary cases. Patients therefore need not travel to the commune clinic for minor illnesses. In addition, there are two large hospitals at the banner seat, one specializing in Western medicine, the other in traditional Mongolian medicine. Serious cases and major operations which can't be handled in the commune are referred to these hospitals.

At the Hanwula Production Team's health centre for women and children, a midwife named Lianhua answered questions about childbirth and family planning. Families throughout China are now being urged to have only one or two children, but this policy does not extend to

the generally underpopulated minority nationality regions. Last year, Lianhua delivered more than 20 babies at the centre, using sterilized equipment and modern birthing techniques. She also gives expectant mothers regular prenatal checkups and helps look after them during their one-month maternity leave should they choose to stay at the centre. These services are all free-of-charge to the mother, who receives her workpoints as usual during this period. In cases of difficulty or abnormality, Lianhua refers the patient to the commune or banner hospital.

In light of the former health history of this region, the large thriving families of Ujimqin Banner are impressive indeed. Before liberation, the loss of large numbers of marriageable men to the lamaseries and the high incidence of venereal diseases forced the Mongolian population into drastic decline. A medical investigation conducted in the pastoral area in the late 1940s found venereal diseases present among 57 per cent of the Mongolian population, causing the sterility of 30 per cent of those women afflicted. The incidence of miscarriages, premature births and stillbirths was as high as 13 per cent. Of the total number of babies born, 49 per cent later died of congenital syphilis. According to a common saying then, healthy children were "as rare as morning stars."

Thirty years ago, Baoyinduleng, director of the banner's public health bureau, participated in a campaign to wipe out venereal diseases and recalled what the situation was like at that time.

"After six months' study at medical school in 1950, I went to the pastoral areas to work in an anti-syphilis medical team. The country had just been liberated and was in the midst of economic difficulties, but the government still allocated large sums in foreign exchange to im-

port medicine. My team rode on horseback from one community to another, caring for patients and teaching principles of hygiene. Within a few years, venereal diseases were wiped out." Two follow-up investigations, one in the mid-50s and the other in the early 60s, showed that these diseases, so deleterious to the Mongolian nationality, had been completely eliminated.

As time went by, there were more and more healthy children on the grassland. Many of them were given the name Naminhu ("the Party's child") by their parents out of gratitude for the care and help of the Communist Party. Today, the population of this banner is almost five times greater than its 1949 level of 7,875, while the Mongolian population of the entire autonomous region has grown to 2.09 million.

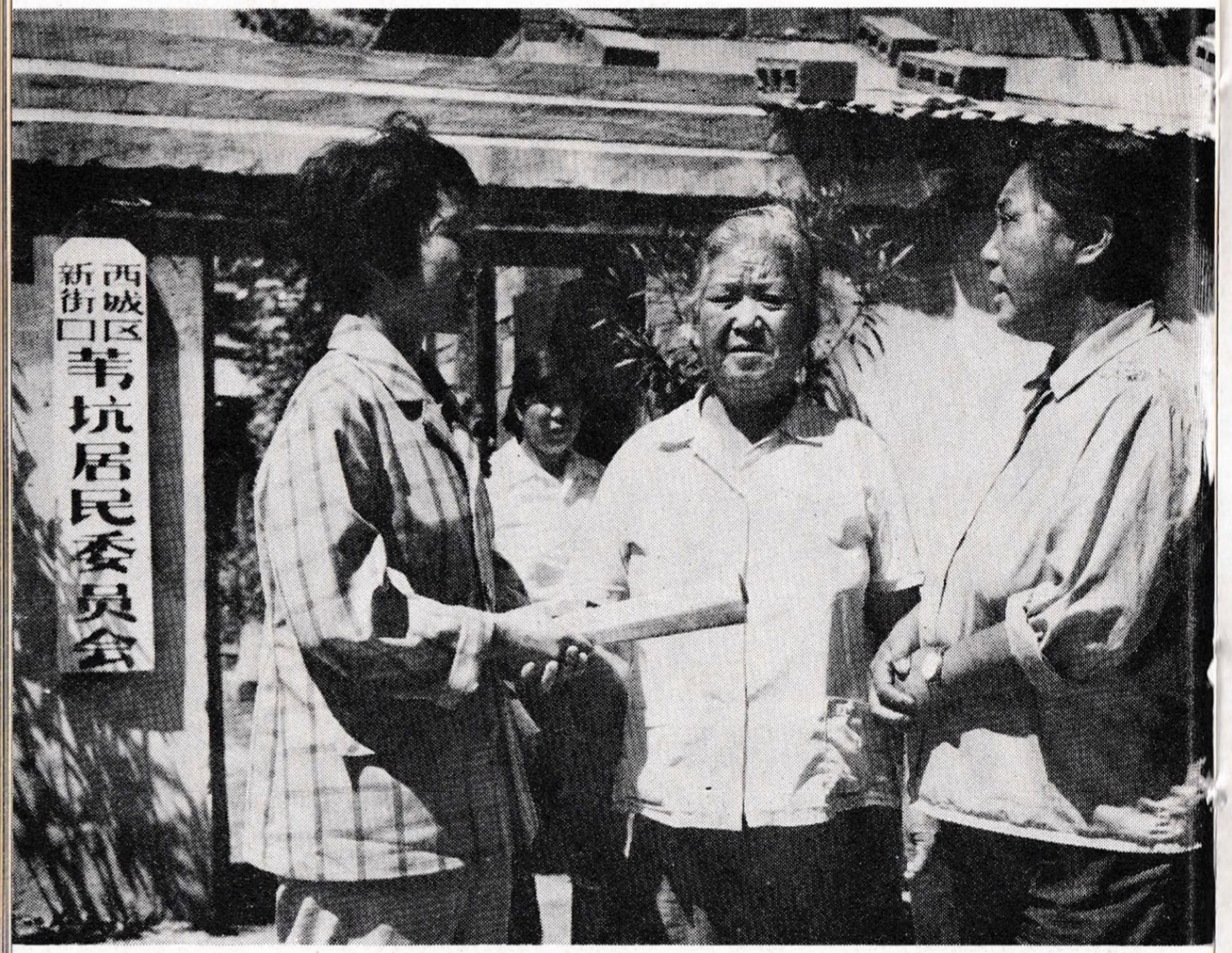
Since liberation, efforts have also been made to prevent and cure infectious diseases among the livestock. This has protected the health of the herdsmen as well. There is now a veterinary station in every banner and people's commune and a veterinarian in each production team. Brucellosis, a disease which once seriously undermined the health of the people as well as the livestock, has been brought under control.

Animal husbandry in East Ujimqin Banner has experienced immense development in the last three decades. Despite periods of disastrous weather and disease among the livestock, the number of animals sold to the state in 1980 was 3.8 times that sold in 1950. Conditions in this banner are better than average, however. Many parts of Inner Mongolia, particularly those semi-pastoral, semi-agricultural areas where grain self-sufficiency has been stressed in the past, suffer seriously from overgrazing, land erosion or desert encroachment. The regional government

is presently taking note of this growing concern, working to improve range management, limit the land area under cultivation and even convert some cultivated areas back into grassland. By drawing lessons from past experience and employing scientific techniques, the people here expect to overcome these and other difficulties and continue moving forward in the years to come.

The Reed Bed Neighbourhood Committee

A back street *(hutong)* within the precinct of the committee.

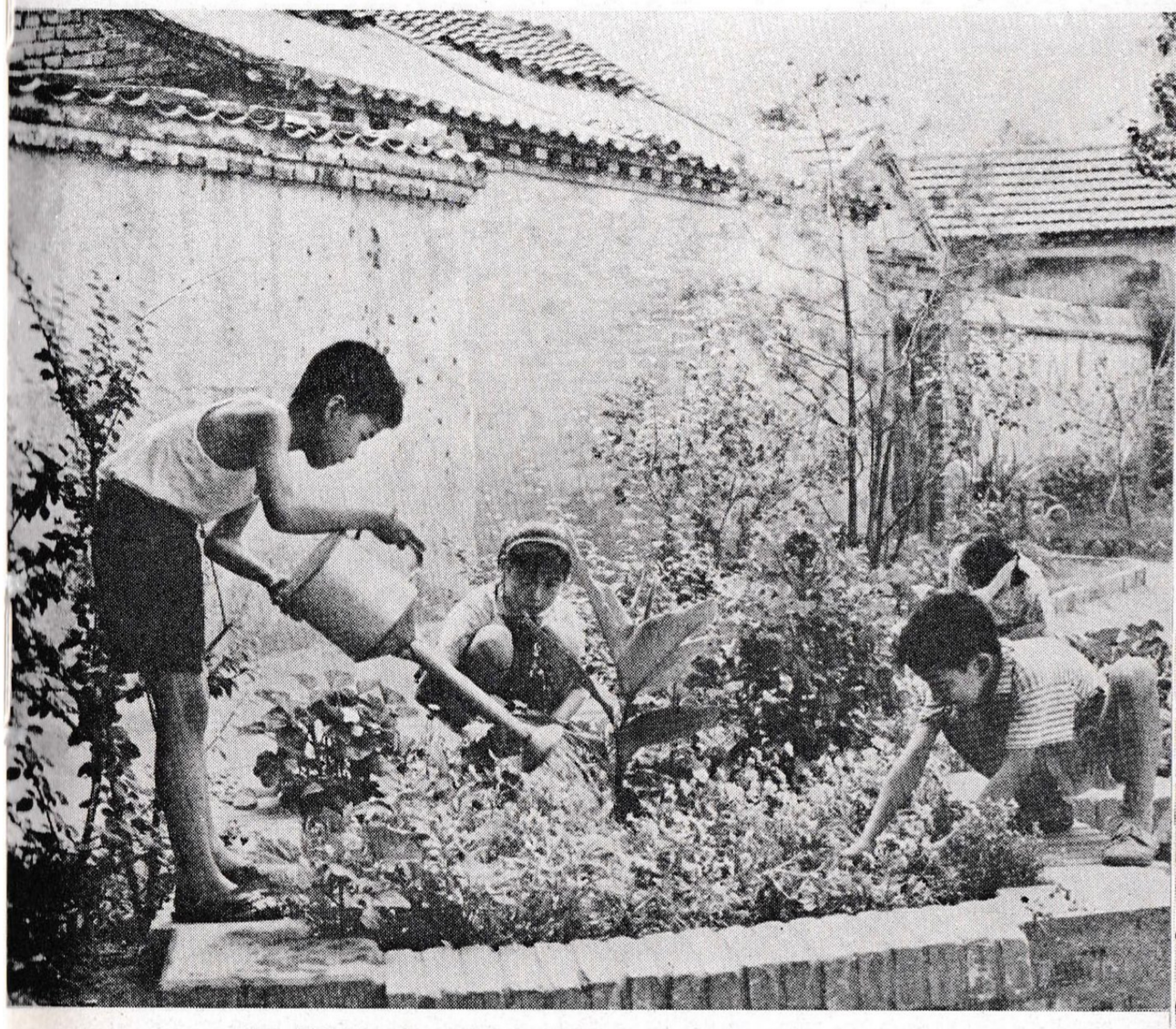


Chairperson Guan Shumin (*second from left*) talking with committee members.

Medical checkups are given by trained paramedics at the neighbourhood health clinic.

Young students getting after-school help with their homework.

Local housewives serve hot lunches to school children of working parents.



Neighbourhood children organized to look after the courtyards.

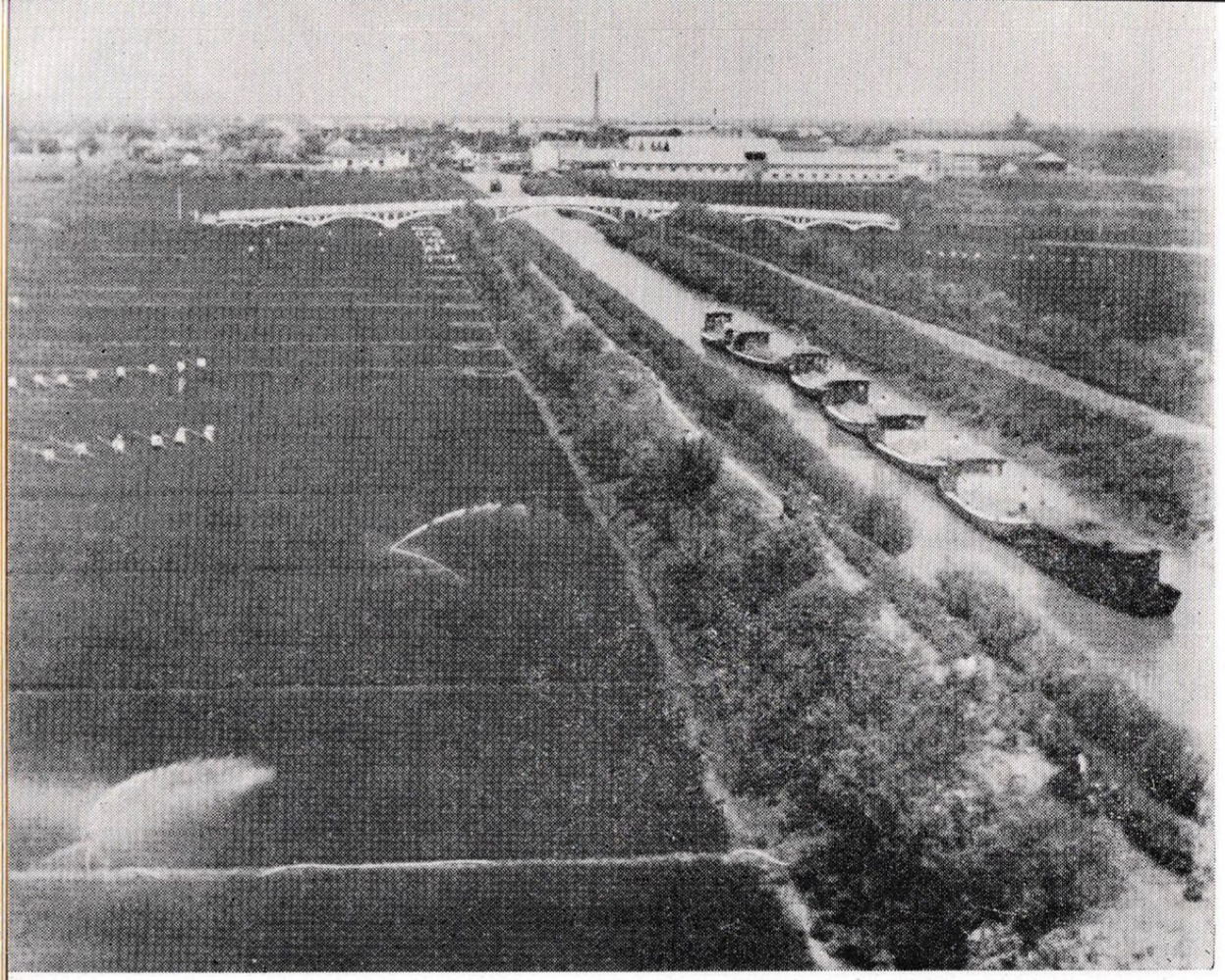
A new service in this community — a public washing machine for the aged, sick and disabled.

A milk station run by the neighbourhood committee.

Door-to-door sale of vegetables is a great convenience for the elderly.

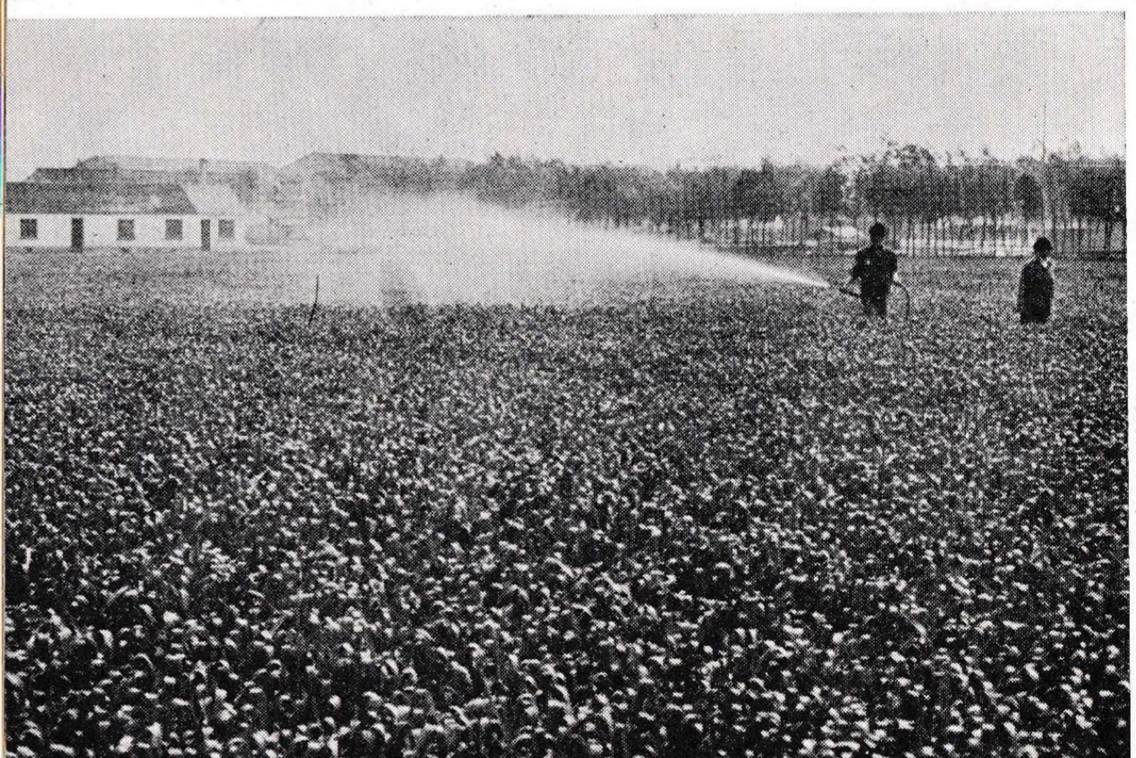
Qianzhou People's Commune

Headquarters of the commune Party and management committees.



Where the commune is situated, the flatland is fertile and well-irrigated.

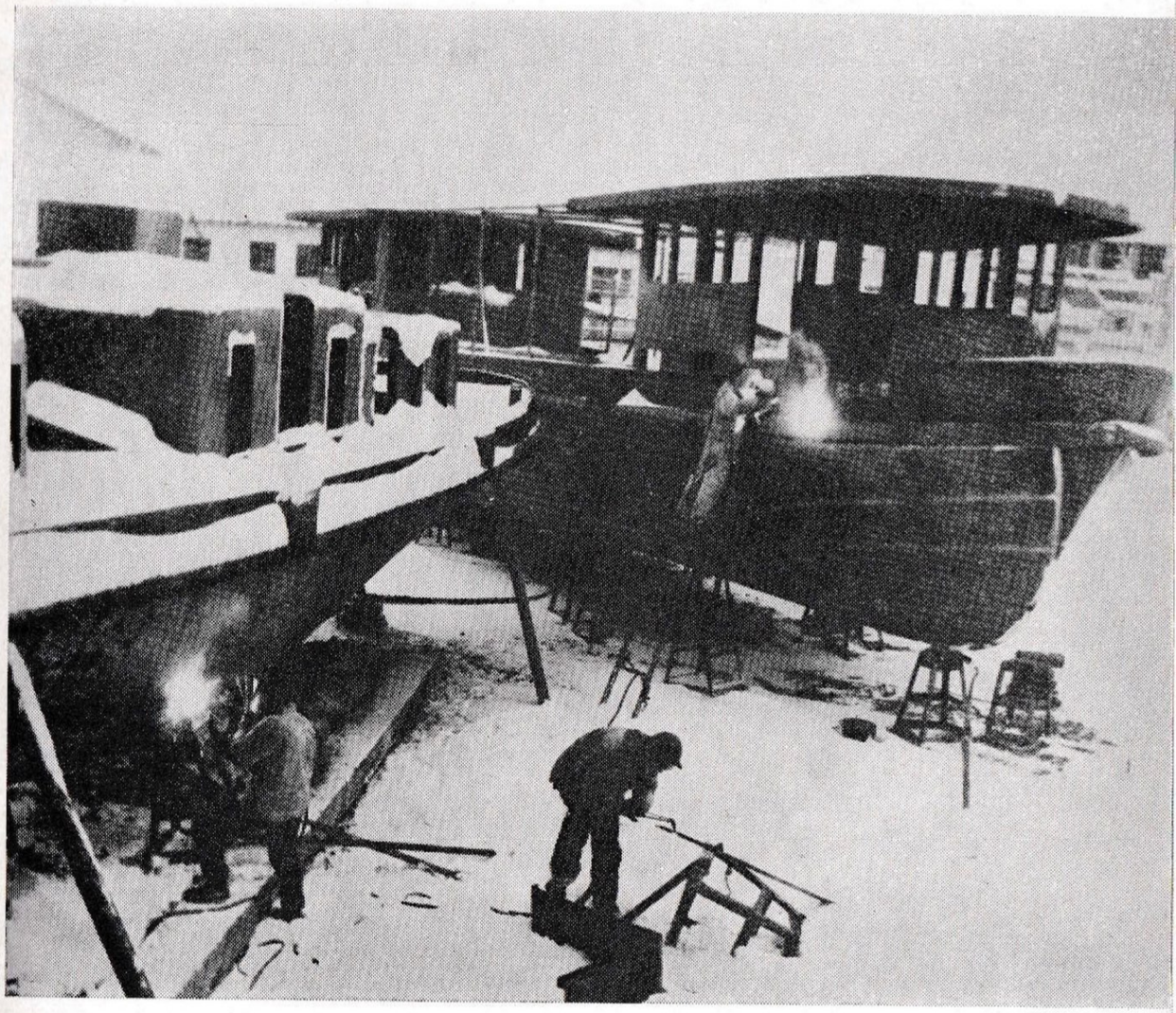
Spraying the winter wheat crop with insecticide

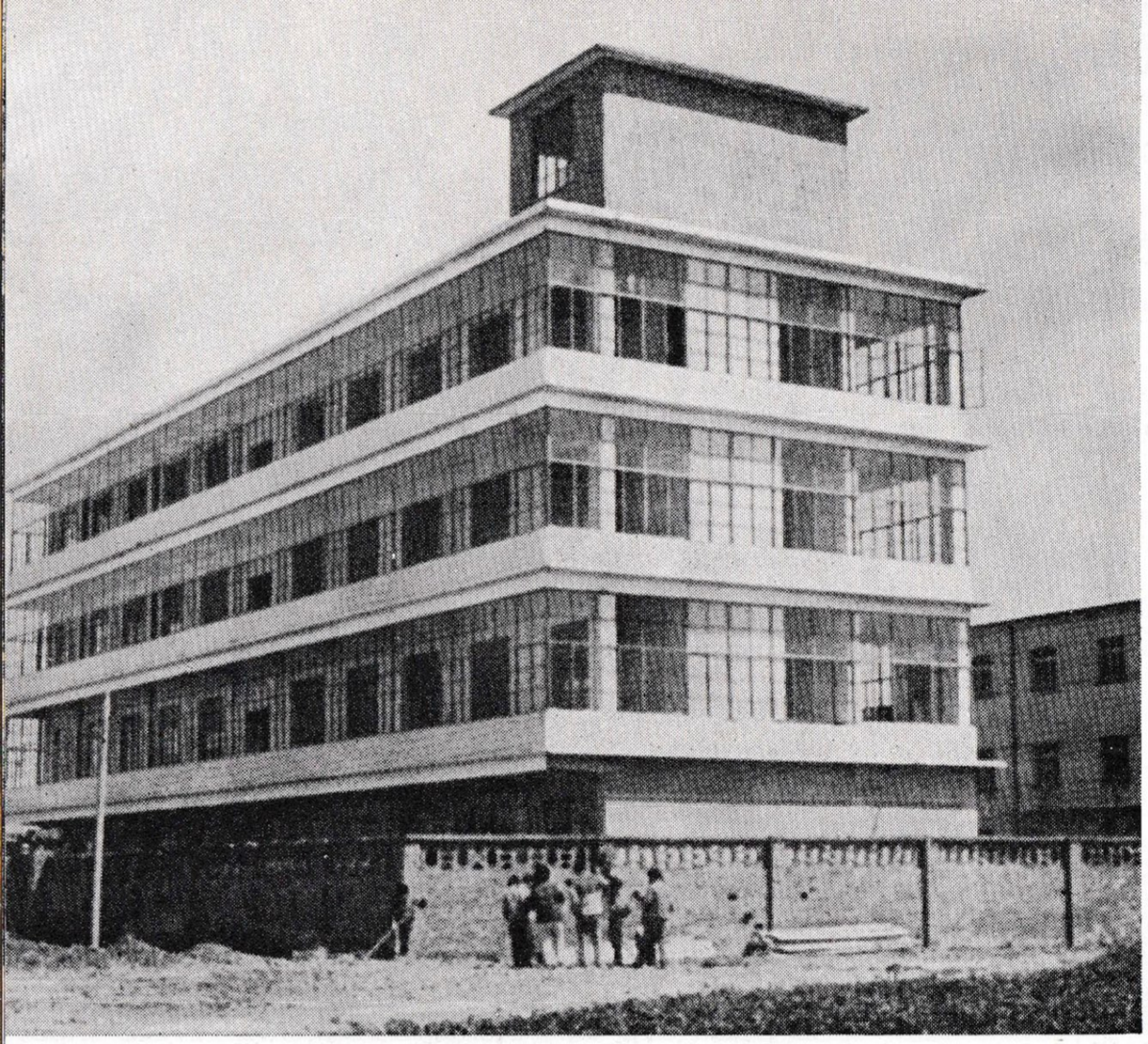


A work team tending rice seedlings before they are transplanted.

Frequently waterlogged lowland turned into irrigation canals.

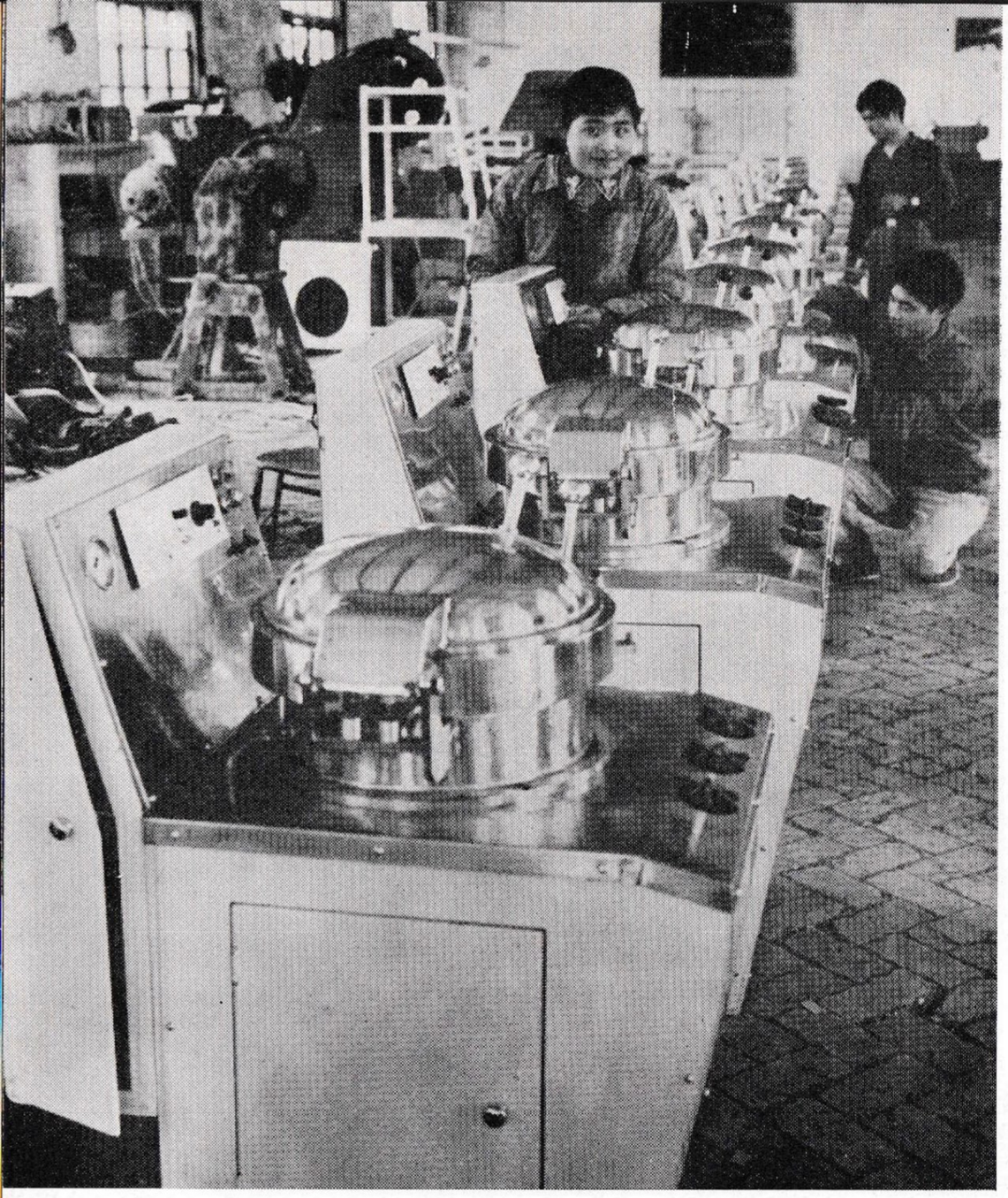
Building small river boats has proved to be a very profitable enterprise.





The commune's new silk filature.

Harvesting silk cocoons.



Yarn-dyers are produced in one of the commune-run factories.

Embroidering in the commune mill is now made more efficient with the help of machines.

Qin Jiahong, Party secretary of the commune,
tests a tractor with farm mechanics.

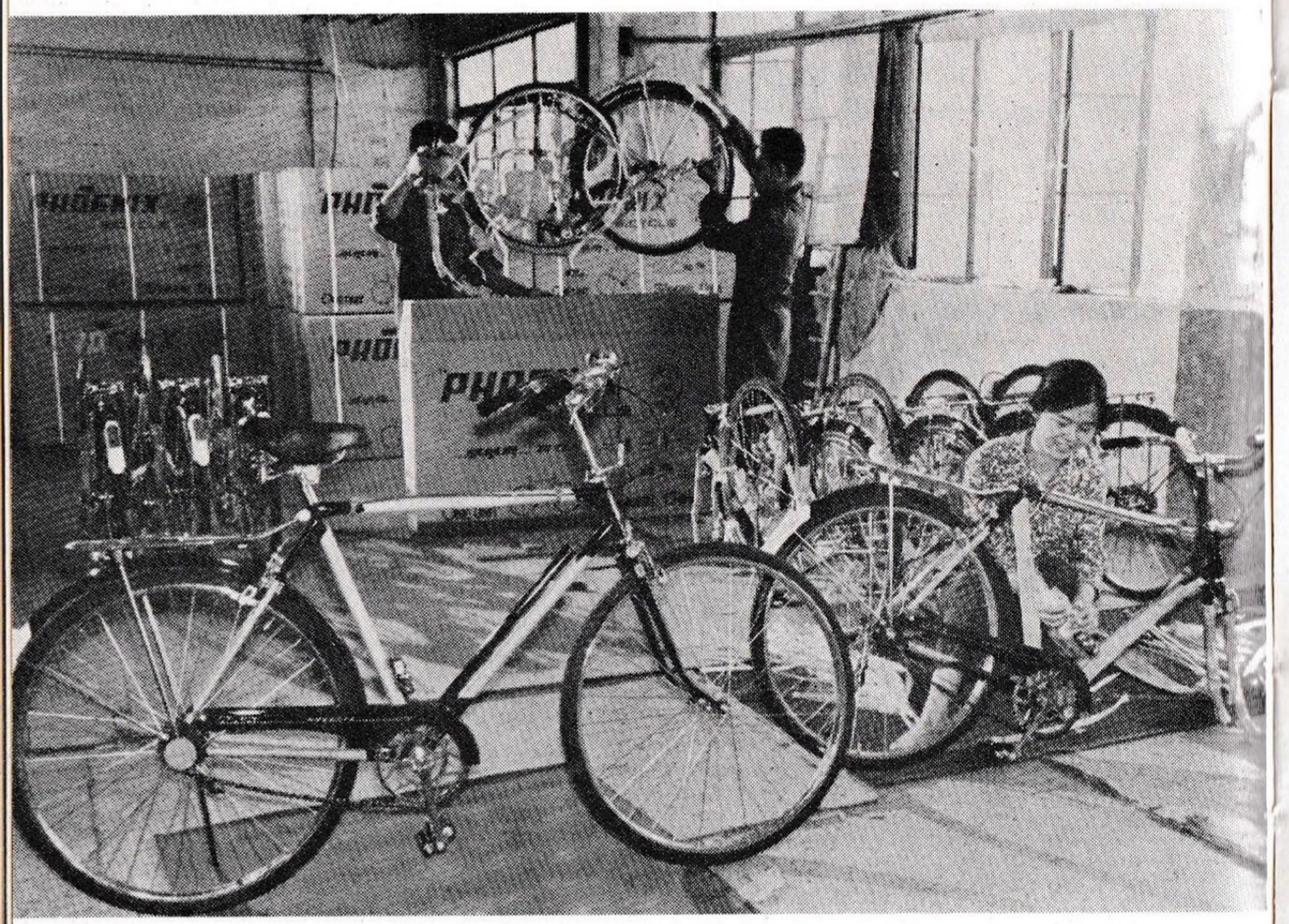
Team leader Tang Weiming in the field.

Japanese visitors are greeted by brigade head Tang Jusheng.

Wu Mingshen and family.

Makers of "Yongjiu" And Other Bicycles

Cyclists on the streets of Shanghai.



Packing bikes for export.

Director Wang Yuanchang (*centre*) of the Shanghai Bicycle Plant discusses ways of improving the quality of frames with welders.

A new apartment building for the factory's workers.

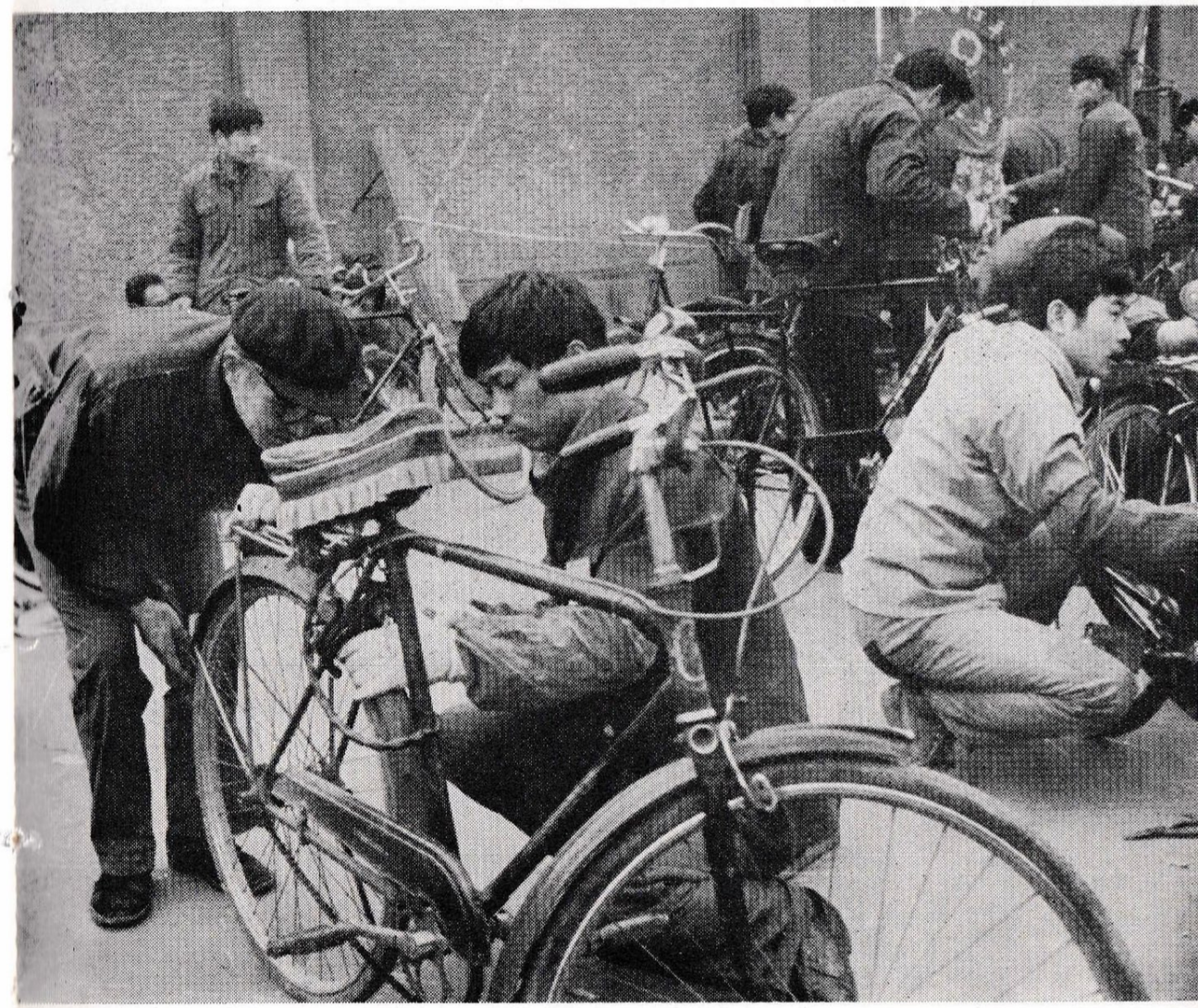
Zhu Yefu and his family have just moved into their new home.

The factory canteen serves tasty, inexpensive meals for workers.

At the factory's sanatorium in the city's suburbs.

Intense concentration around the chessboard.

As part of a "Serve the People" drive, recently launched at the Shanghai Bicycle Plant, young workers offer free curb-side repair services to bicycle owners.

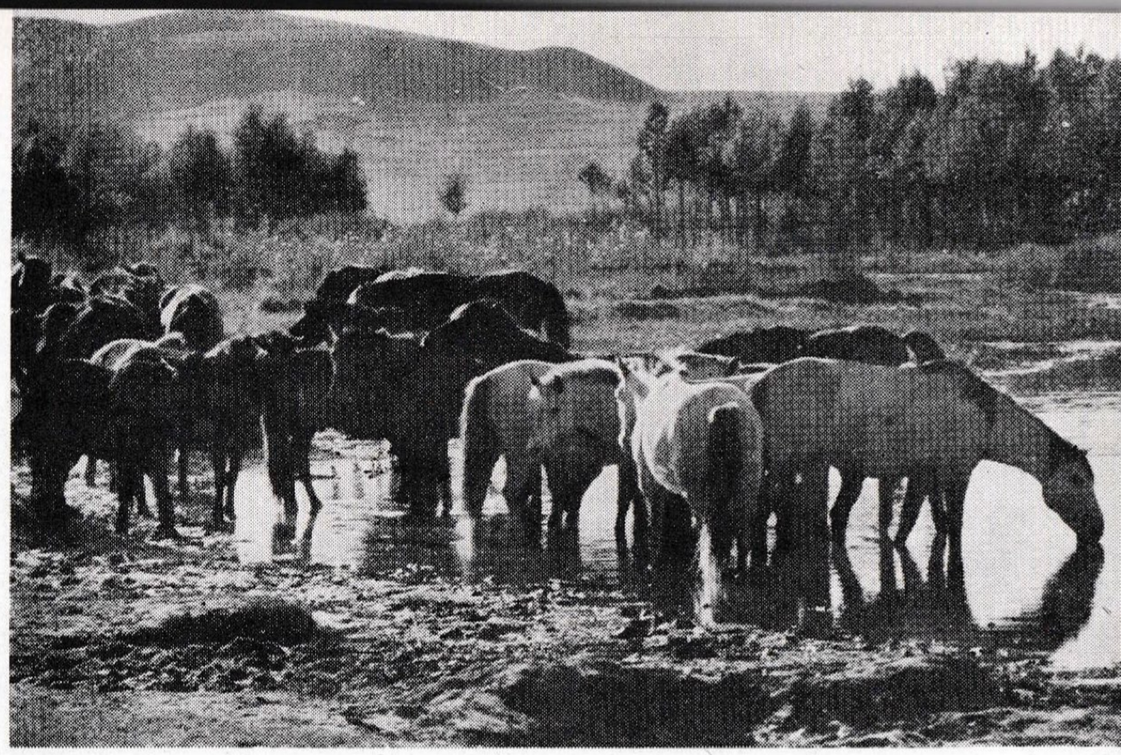


Responding to the national anti-pollution campaign, the plant is now installing a wastewater processing station.

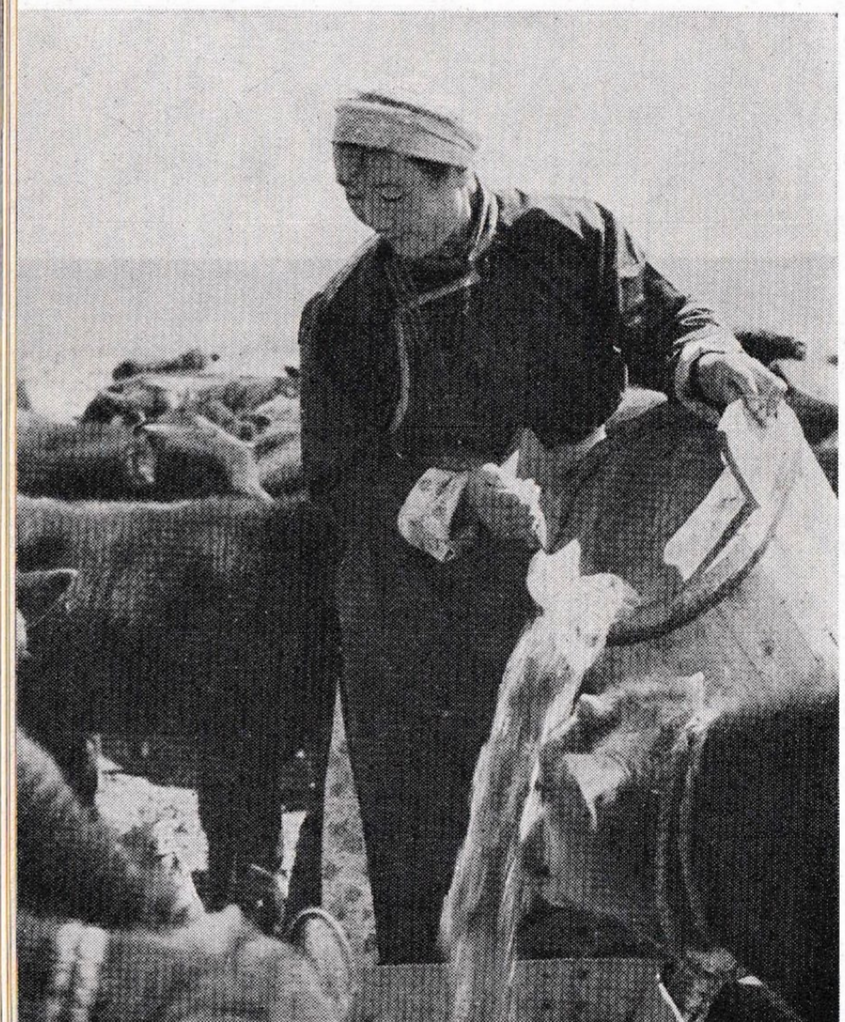
The East Ujimqin Banner

Supper in a Mongolian yurt.

Harvesting hay for the cold winter months to come.

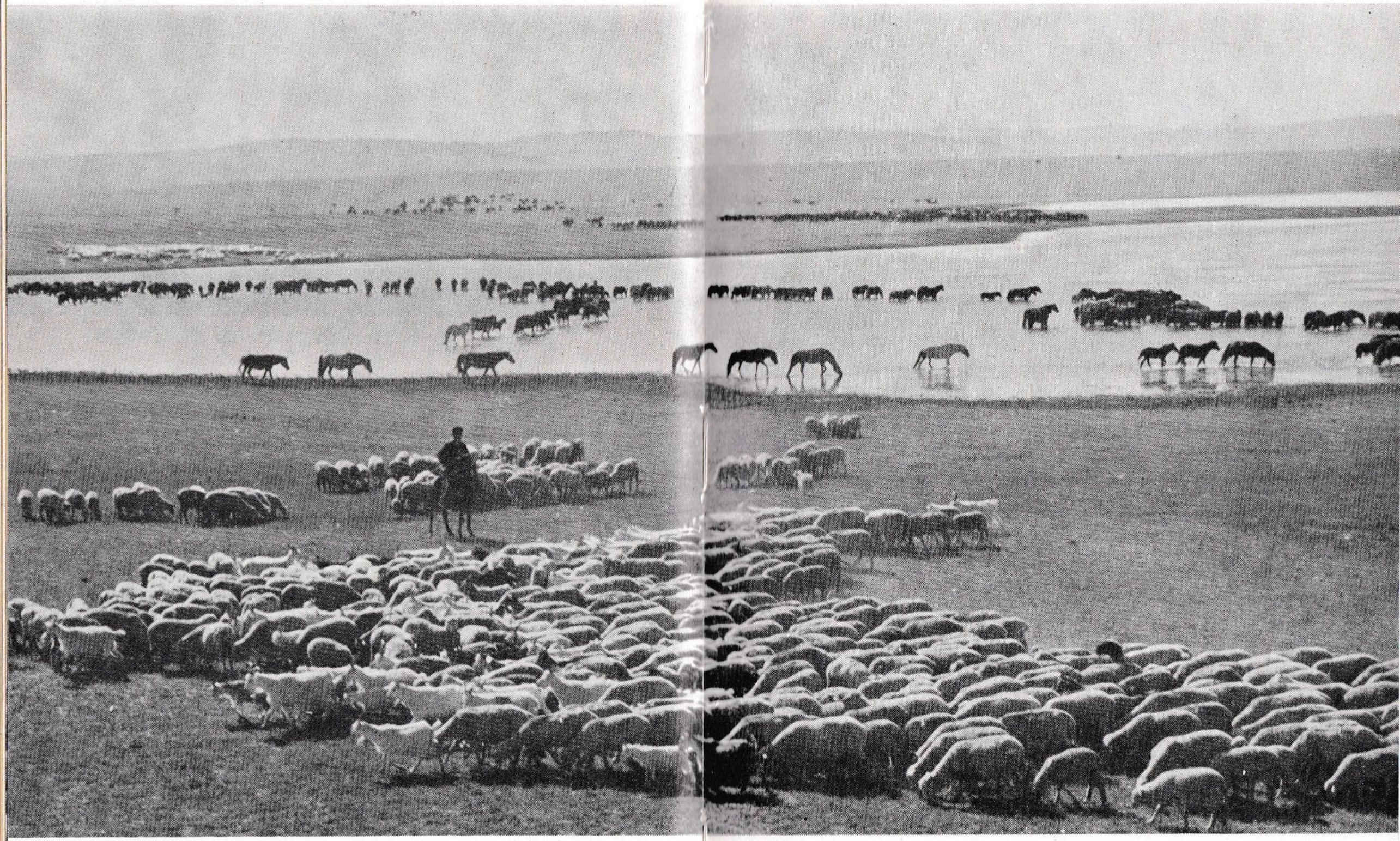


Autumn brings abundant water for the animals.



Cowherdess Zhoula is a national March 8 Red Banner holder.

A newly installed sheep dip.



Springtime on the Silinhot prairie.

Silk and riding boots are high on the shopping list of the herdsmen.

Mongolian students at one of the banner's boarding schools.

Wrestling and other feats of strength are big attractions at the annual Nadamu Fair.

A typical yurt village on the grassland.

«今日中国»小丛书
（之二）
基层生活
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北京周报社出版
1981年9月第一版
编号（英）17733—002
00095
17—E—1599P

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